



Alabama Department *of* Conservation *and* Natural Resources

03-04 ANNUAL REPORT





Honorable Bob Riley  
Governor of Alabama  
State Capitol  
Montgomery, AL 36130



Dear Governor Riley:

I am pleased to submit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2003-2004. The Department accomplished many goals last year.

Marine Police Officers are working with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to implement the Marine Sewage Act. The officers have been enforcing the act as it pertains to the regulating of boat sewage discharge. More than 700 inspections were conducted on recreational and residential vessels and yearly inspection decals were issued.

Renovations continue at many of Alabama's State Parks. The lodge and hotel at Guntersville State Park was closed for renovations, while Gulf State Park was hit hard by Hurricane Ivan.

A program to eliminate derelict crab traps in Alabama's coastal waters was completed for a second year and resulted in the removal of 418 derelict traps. This program followed the overwhelming success of the 2003 program which resulted in the removal of 1,074 traps. The reduction of traps from 2003 to 2004 is a result of the cooperation of everyone involved with the program.

Eleven additional tracts of land were purchased during the fiscal year by the Forever Wild Land Trust. Total land acquisitions under the Forever Wild program now exceed 100,000 acres.

The Department continues to provide opportunities for Alabama's youth to experience outdoor recreational activities. This year the Community Fishing Program conducted 63 events with over 12,416 participants.

The Hunting Trail for People with Physical Disabilities continues to be well received. During the year two new sites, one in Crenshaw County and one in partnership with the USDA Forest Service in Cleburne County, were added. The season opened with 15 sites on the trail.

I am extremely proud of the Department's accomplishments and I appreciate your support and leadership to the State of Alabama.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Barnett Lawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the last name "Lawley" being more prominent.

M. Barnett Lawley  
Commissioner

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# Department Overview

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is an executive and administrative department of the State of Alabama created by statute. The Commissioner, appointed by the Governor as a member of his cabinet, advises the Governor and Legislature on management of freshwater fish, wildlife, marine resources, waterway safety, state lands, state parks, and other natural resources.

## Scope of Operations

The Department's scope of operations includes the administration, management and maintenance of 22 state parks, 23 public fishing lakes, three freshwater fish hatcheries, 34 wildlife management areas, two waterfowl refuges, two wildlife sanctuaries, a mariculture center with 35 ponds, and 645,000 acres of trust lands managed for the benefit of several state agencies, the General Fund and Alabama Trust Fund. Other departmental functions include maintenance of a State Land Resource Information Center and administration of the Forever Wild land acquisition program.

## Organization

During Fiscal Year 2004, the Department had five operational divisions and seven support sections. The operational divisions were Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. Support sections were Accounting, Diversity and Recruiting, Engineering, Information and Education, Information Technology, Legal, and Personnel and Payroll. The Commissioner was advised by a 10-member Conservation Advisory Board appointed by the Governor.

Division directors managed the Department's programs under their jurisdiction through authority delegated by the Legislature and the commissioner. Concerted efforts were made to balance needs and requirements against resources and available funding to satisfy present and future public and resource requirements. Active public education and voluntary participation programs were expanded and new plans were implemented to achieve maximum multiple-use benefits consistent with resource conservation.

## Department Goals

The Department's major goal is to promote the statewide stewardship and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources, and to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy these resources.

## Funding

Funding for the Department is generated through special revenues, which include federal money, cigarette taxes, user and license fees, mandated interest from endowment and federal regulations. The Forever Wild Program received interest income from the Alabama Trust Fund. Specific revenue sources for the five operational divisions are as follows:

**Marine Police:** Boat registration fees, fines, marine gas tax and federal grants.

**Marine Resources:** Saltwater fishing licenses, fines, marine gas tax and federal grants. Marine Resources also has an endowment but it has not grown enough as of date to enhance operations.

**State Lands:** Management fees from the sale of timber, minerals and various leases on state lands administered under the Land Based Asset Management Program. Further, the division receives additional federal grants which support specific programs.

**State Parks:** User-generated funds in the form of entrance, rental, lodging, golf and other recreational fees. State Parks received a modest amount of funding from cigarette tax revenue.

**Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries:** Fishing and hunting licenses and permits; fines; waterfowl stamps; federal allocations from excise taxes on sporting arms, ammunition, archery gear and some fishing tackle; and federal grants. Interest income, although at slightly declining interest rates, continues to be generated by the Game and Fish endowment fund for resident lifetime hunting and fishing licenses. Direct donations and voluntary state income tax refund check-offs for the Nongame Wildlife Program continue to decrease from previous fiscal years.

## CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

The Conservation Advisory Board, created by statute, is composed of 10 members appointed by the governor for alternating terms of six years, and three ex-officio members in the persons of the Governor, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, and the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources serves as the ex-officio secretary of the board.

The Advisory Board assists in formulating policies for the Department of Conservation, examines all rules and regulations and makes recommendations for their change or amendment. By a two-thirds vote of the members

present and with the Governor's approval, the board can amend, make any changes, repeal or create and promulgate additional rules and regulations. The Board also assists in publicizing the Department's programs and activities.

### Meetings

The Advisory Board met twice during FY 2004:

- March 6, 2004 at the State Capitol in Montgomery
- May 22, 2004 at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores

The Board also held a special hearing on July 28, 2004 at the Folsom Building in Montgomery.

### Conservation Advisory Board Members as of September 30, 2004

Members	Home Town	Term Expires
Dan Moultrie, Chairman	Alabaster	March 28, 2009
Louis Coles	Enterprise	March 28, 2009
George Harbin	Gadsden	May 20, 2005
Bill Hatley	Clanton	May 20, 2005
Johnny Johnson	Tuscaloosa	March 28, 2009
W. Grant Lynch	Talladega	May 9, 2007
Wayne May	Eutaw	March 28, 2009
James W. Porter, II	Birmingham	May 9, 2007
Ross Self	Gulf Shores	March 28, 2009
Marvin Willis	Muscle Shoals	May 20, 2005

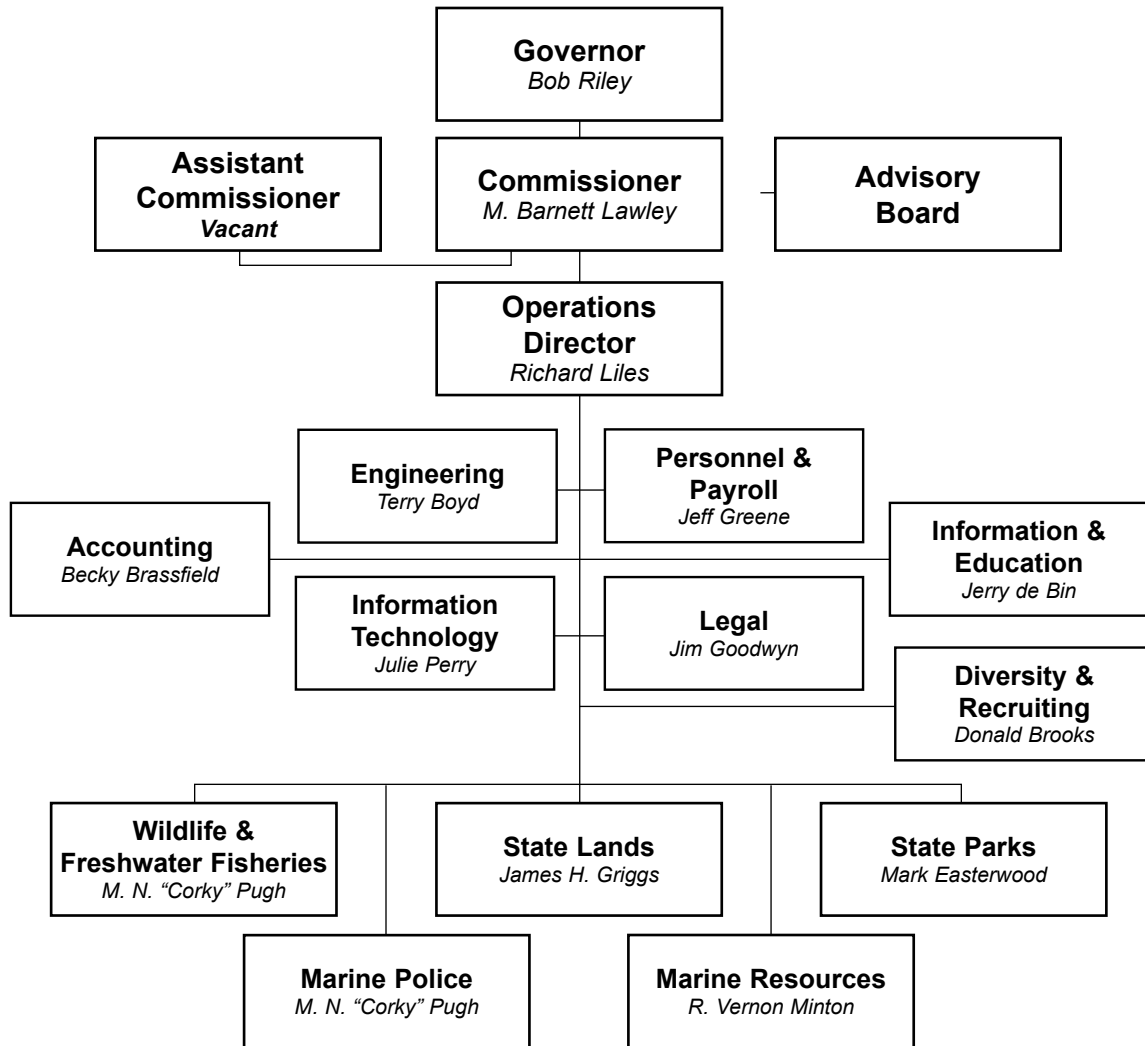
### Ex-officio Members

Bob Riley, Governor  
Gaines Smith, Auburn University Cooperative Extension System Interim Director  
Ron Sparks, Department of Agriculture and Industries Commissioner

### Ex-officio Secretary of the Board

M. Barnett Lawley, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Commissioner

# Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources



## 2003-2004 Budgets and Expenditures for Administrative Division

<b>Section</b>	<b>Budgeted Amounts</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
Accounting	\$861,009	\$704,815
Auditing	\$181,836	\$155,029
Commissioner's Office	\$608,628	\$501,306
Diversity	\$225,631	\$134,197
Engineering	\$1,670,831	\$1,422,082
Information & Education	\$945,254	\$713,985
Information Technology	\$905,660	\$936,186
Legal	\$830,309	\$739,834
License	\$249,639	\$201,121
Personnel & Payroll	\$712,248	\$561,696
Warehouse	\$149,723	\$129,933
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$7,340,768</b>	<b>\$6,200,184</b>

# Administrative Division

## COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

The Commissioner is the executive officer of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and provides overall direction and guidance for carrying out the Governor's directives and implementing enacted legislation. The Commissioner establishes goals, policies and directions; approves programs and budgets; delegates authority; and provides support to administer the Department efficiently and effectively.

The Chief of Operations acts as liaison to the Alabama Legislature and other state agencies and serves as the Department's chief of staff. Two support personnel assist the Commissioner and Operations Chief.

The Commissioner's administrative staff includes seven sections that provide administrative support for the Commissioner and the Department's operational divisions. The administrative support sections are Accounting, Diversity and Recruiting, Engineering, Information and Education, Information Technology, Legal, and Personnel and Payroll. The operational divisions fund the Commissioner's office and administrative staff.

## ACCOUNTING

The Accounting Section is the central clearinghouse for all departmental financial data. Accounting maintains and records all receipts and disbursements for the commissioner's office, staff sections and each of the five operating divisions. Accounting is responsible for five internal functions: General Accounting, Auditing, Budgeting, Administrative Procurement, and Agency Office Supplies/Central Mail.

General Accounting includes daily deposits of departmental funds, recording of all expenditures, preparation of monthly financial reports and statements, development of fiscal policies and procedures, reconciliation, coordination and preparation of the annual budget request.

Auditing is responsible for auditing all Conservation Department funds, including royalty and commission contracts. Additionally, the section performs fiscal audits of the individual state parks.

Procurement provides purchasing assistance to each administrative section.

Agency Office Supplies and Central Mail maintains a central supply room for daily office supply needs. One accounting staff member maintains the central mailroom.

## Accomplishments

In November 2003, the State of Alabama won an \$11.9 billion verdict against Exxon Mobil on underpayment of oil and gas royalties and fraud. This verdict stemmed from the retrial of a case originally tried in the year 2000. The

verdict was subsequently reduced to \$3.4 billion, \$102 million of which is for compensatory damages and interest. The remainder is for fraud and the case is currently on appeal to the Alabama Supreme Court. Additionally, a \$6.8 million payment was negotiated with Shell on royalty underpayments subsequent to the 2002 settlement agreement. The agreement resolved all remaining royalty payment issues going forward.

Recreational license revenues total over \$15 million annually. The new Internet and agent point-of-sale of licenses was a success during its first full fiscal year. As a result of this action, there was a two- to four-week earlier collection of license revenue, which in turn produced more interest income. This effort has also reduced the operating costs associated with printing, handling, and shipping charges.

## Future Plans

Currently there are several automated license systems and a manual system. It is anticipated that all license sales will be fully automated within the next two to three years.

Although the automated systems are allowing the capture of demographic information of users of the state's recreational resources, consolidation of the information and retrieval mechanisms must be devised. Without such action, the automated system will be unable to provide valuable statistics for management, contact resources to find out what user needs or concerns are, and feedback on current and ongoing projects.

## DIVERSITY AND RECRUITING

The Diversity and Recruiting Section develops and implements programs designed to increase the pool of qualified applicants needed to hire and promote a work force that reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of the state of Alabama. This section maintains the department's Affirmative Employment Plan, does statewide recruiting, and contracts diversity training for the Department.

## Accomplishments

The Natural Resources Law Enforcement Training program combined Internet and classroom meetings to introduce urban students to natural resources law enforcement.

The experimental class combined in person conservation departmental experts with the criminal justice and technology staff of Auburn University Montgomery, used the Internet to deliver a cutting edge technology driven model that is being offered again in March 2005 to recruit/train students at Auburn University Montgomery, Troy State University Montgomery, Alabama State University, and Tuskegee University. The class will be available in 2006 as a Internet only class through Auburn University



## Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

	DCNR Total ACTUAL 2003-2004	DCNR Total BUDGETED 2004-2005	DCNR Total REQUESTED 2005-2006
<b>Number of Employees</b>	1,199	1,410	1,429
<b>Unencumbered Cash Balance Forward</b>	31,273,166	22,748,682	14,280,238
<b>Total Federal Funding</b>	17,560,485	18,848,407	18,837,864
Hunting Licenses	6,460,797	6,395,548	6,493,610
Fishing Licenses	8,258,761	8,095,547	8,343,610
Land Management Fees	3,919,937	4,500,000	4,500,000
User Fees	22,826,806	28,000,000	25,200,000
Boat Registration	3,656,295	3,650,000	3,670,000
Timber Sales	579,631	1,185,000	760,000
Fines	841,276	700,000	860,000
Trust Fund Interest	0	0	0
Other	2,074,968	2,236,049	2,571,512
<b>Total Departmental Related Receipts</b>	48,618,471	54,762,144	52,398,732
Cigarette Tax	3,166,612	3,500,000	3,500,000
Gasoline Tax	3,633,872	3,570,000	3,630,000
Use Tax Discount Cap	1,009,400	1,023,007	1,561,961
Sales Tax Discount Cap	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
General Fund			
(Jeff Co. Recreational Facility-Pass Through)	18,750	0	0
DCNR Transfers	50,000	50,000	50,000
Forever Wild Land and			
Forever Wild Stewardship Funding	275,000	275,000	275,000
<b>Total Other Receipts</b>	13,153,634	13,418,007	14,016,961
Administrative Transfer	6,788,467	6,788,467	8,200,467
<b>Actual All Receipts</b>	86,121,057	93,817,025	93,454,024
Personnel Costs	34,962,110	42,025,608	45,754,070
Employee Benefits	10,452,053	12,990,019	14,009,477
Travel-In-State	1,006,806	1,044,557	1,032,313
Travel-Out-State	101,822	201,203	157,361
Repairs and Maintenance	1,656,284	2,135,266	1,146,299
Rentals and Leases	1,258,011	1,624,497	1,497,089
Utilities and Communication	4,842,027	4,999,037	4,599,448
Professional Services	7,586,614	8,550,869	8,662,747
Supplies, Materials & Operating Expense	7,621,325	9,261,874	7,114,777
Transportation Equipment Operations	2,440,457	2,393,561	2,624,222
Grants and Benefits	1,431,674	1,407,062	1,349,803
Capital Outlay	12,429,874	5,675,000	1,400,000
Transportation Equipment Purchases	1,486,507	1,997,788	2,420,304
Other Equipment Purchases	531,512	740,661	807,925
Miscellaneous	6,838,467	7,238,467	8,250,467
<b>Total BFY Expenditures</b>	94,645,541	102,285,469	100,826,302
<b>Revenues versus Expenditures Over (Under)</b>	(8,524,484)	(8,468,444)	(7,372,278)
<b>Unencumbered Cash Balance Forward</b>	22,748,682	14,280,238	6,907,960

Montgomery, and will be available to interested students anywhere. We believe that it will become the most effective recruiting tool that we have used for AUM and the Alabama Department of Conservation.

## Future Plans

- Continue developing statewide recruiting using field employees as a recruiting resource.
- Develop partnerships with elementary, junior high, and high schools through our Adopt a School program; increase awareness in urban school districts of careers in conservation, and provide a link to outdoor recreational opportunities available in the state of Alabama.
- Enlarge our college internship program to include most four-year schools in Alabama where logistically possible.
- Maintain our commitment to the Student Aide Program.
- Maintain our commitment to the Welfare to Work partnership with the Alabama Department of Human Resources.
- Continue the Natural Resources Law Enforcement Training program to include instructors from Alabama State University, Auburn University Montgomery, Alabama A&M University, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region IV, U.S. Treasury Department's ATF Division, and instructors from the Department of Conservation's five operating divisions.
- Provide diversity training for managers and employees on a continuing basis.
- Increase community input into the Conservation diversity committee working group.
- Continue to work with the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and our Legal Section to get an approved Affirmative Employment Plan.

## ENGINEERING

The Engineering Section provides professional planning and programming, engineering, architectural, landscape architectural, surveying and related administrative services to the various divisions of the department. These professional services best protect the state's natural resources by providing parks, recreational opportunities and services. The section's professional staff of engineers, architects, landscape architect and land surveyors ensure that solutions to conservation planning and programming, design and construction problems and the development of departmental projects are integrated with ecologically functional and aesthetic aspects within the confines of economic feasibility.

## Facilities and Personnel

The Engineering Section had 23 employees dur-

ing FY 2003-2004: one Chief of Engineering Services, one Architect II, one Professional Land Surveyor III, one Conservation Engineer I, one Landscape Architect, one Architect I, one Design Technician Supervisor, one Professional Land Surveyor I/II, one Clerk Stenographer III, one Conservation Construction Inspector I, three Land Survey Technicians, three Design Technicians, one Survey Assistant, one ASA II, three Utility Laborers and one retired state employee. The section's facilities are located in Montgomery.

## Significant Accomplishments

Engineering Section programs consist of providing the necessary professional expertise required to reach department goals. These programs include capital and improvement, using both out-sources and in-house design and in-house construction, master planning and site planning for department facilities. General technical assistance is also performed including construction document preparation, project status reports, annual reports, replies to correspondence, feasibility studies, advisement on proper repair and operation manuals, providing file information, technical field assistance, emergency project involvement, dam inspections, specification writing for material and equipment purchases, field maintenance and training assistance.

Engineering was also involved with surveying assistance and technical advice on construction projects boundaries and property corners for State Parks, delineation and location of oyster reefs, public access areas, wildlife management areas, public lakes and other state managed property. Approximately 30 percent of Engineering Section time was spent on technical assistance of a general nature involving various Department activities requiring engineering input.

The Engineering Section provided on site professional and technical support with the advent of hurricane Ivan in September of 2004 and coordinated with FEMA, local communities and other federal, state and local agencies in the cleanup and reconstruction of storm devastated facilities.

The Engineering Section prepared new and updated management area maps, updated and produced new park trail maps and completed numerous retirement certificates and appreciation awards. The section continued discussions between Department of Transportation and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the purpose of relaying digital information and continued the process of converting state maps, state park boundaries and wildlife management areas, new state park brochure/map and other related data to digital form.

The Engineering Section assisted the Commissioner's Office and the State Parks Division in the advertising for, and selection of private architectural/engineering firms to prepare documents for the State Parks Restoration Program. The section remains as a coordinating liaison

between the Department of Conservation and these private firms to communicate the needs of the Department and to ensure their inclusion into the completed plans.

## Administrative

**General:** Provided location maps; continued work on the Engineering Section's USGS quad maps; initiated updating the Engineering Section's filing (placing all information in the computer); provided assistance and support in the Parks renovation program; continued section's complete archival file scanning and production of digital format plan archives.

## Marine Police

**Logan Martin:** Completed construction phase of District IV headquarters building and.

Montgomery: Completed construction phase for new warehouse facility on Fairgrounds Road.

**Orange Beach:** Completed design phase of Ole River and Boggy Point boat launch and accesses.

**Baldwin County:** Performed surveys.

## Marine Resources

**Dauphin Island:** Produced additional Dauphin Island boat ramp survey and produced construction documents; Produced sounding and survey work for properties and areas under Marine Resources control.

**Claude Peteet Mariculture Center:** Completed construction phase for project and design for saltwater line. Completed construction phase for office expansion at Claude Peteet.

**Baldwin County:** Performed surveys.

**Fort Morgan:** Provided plans and contract documents for boat ramps, seawall and parking.

**Gulf/Mobile Bay:** Inshore and offshore fishing reefs

## State Lands

**Spanish Fort:** Completed construction of new boardwalk at the Gatra Wehle Nature Center Complex at Blakeley State Park; completed construction administration for the Cockleshell Boardwalk at Blakeley State Park. Prepared drawings for Nature Center Landscape Design.

**Mobile-Tensaw Forever Wild Tract:** Evaluated removal of encroaching structures along tract.

Weeks Bay: Construction phase continued for retaining wall, seawall and docks projects; construction phase completed for improvements to laboratory and research building at National Estuarine Research Reserve.

**Bullock County:** Completed preliminary design for satellite toilet facility at the Wehle Nature Center.

**Forever Wild:** Surveyed property in Jackson and Lauderdale counties.

**General:** Continued to work with consultant for master planning for Environmental Complex (Meaher North); performed property line surveys on school lands state-

wide. Located monuments on the Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi state lines; located mean high tide lines in Baldwin County; assisted in acreage determination and navigability research.

## State Parks

**Cathedral Caverns:** Completed design work, project construction documents on new pedestrian facility for cave entrance. Completed construction phase for new shelters; coordinated with park crew for future construction.

**Cheaha:** Completed construction phase for water system improvements; completed year end inspection for Bald Rock Lodge, cabins and observation tower.

**DeSoto:** Continued to produce boundary line survey for segment of park; began construction phase of CCC cabin renovation.

**Chewacla:** Completed construction phase of CCC cabin renovations; finished schematics for new office and entrance; began coordination of phase two of renovation work.

**Joe Wheeler:** Administered work in continuing improvements; completed boundary and topographic surveys. Began construction of docks and boating center improvements

**Lakepoint:** Administered work with consultants preparing design documents for renovation of lodge, cabins, marina, and site improvements.

**Meaher:** Developed plans and continued to produce base mapping and master planning schematic; administered work with consultants preparing design documents for campground improvements; completed design work on new bathhouse.

**Paul Grist:** Performed boundary surveys.

**Oak Mountain:** Administered work with consultants preparing design documents for master plan and improvements; coordinated golf course renovation and began work on pro shop renovation; continued coordination of expansion of native wildflower areas at park road system.

**Lake Guntersville:** Provided additional survey and topographic information for park improvement projects; performed property line surveys; administered work with overall lodge and park improvements-construction phase that has begun.

**Gulf:** Continued to administer/work with consultants preparing design documents for park improvements; participated in master planning and lodge/conference center improvements; worked with consultant in renovation of state fishing pier; continued to provide survey and topographic information for park improvement projects; performed property line surveys; completed plans and construction documents, and worked with local authorities in partnership for dune enhancement habitat restoration and facility improvements at Florida Point, Cotton Bayou, Romar Beach and County Road 2 sites; Completed plans and let projects for campground renovation and new beach pavilion (delayed because of Hurricane Ivan).

**Lake Lurleen:** Continued to administer work with consultants preparing design documents for park improvements; performed property line surveys.

**Wind Creek:** Completed construction phase of new bathhouse under construction by the State Parks construction crew; assisted Parks with new cabin work.

**Monte Sano:** Performed preliminary investigations and project scope for park improvement project; provided construction administration for renovations to the existing Tavern structure and campground improvements; performed property line surveys.

**General:** Conducted research/plans for various other parks; performed preliminary investigations and project scope for various park improvement projects working with consultants; continued production/update of brochure maps for State Parks; produced and administered aerial mapping project of all state parks and provided assistance in consultant selection for ongoing Parks Renovation Program; provided assistance for Parks master planning program.

## Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

**State Lakes:** Continued coordination of work done by fisheries at Lee County Lake; Washington County Lake drain tower design and contract administration; continued to performed property line surveys in Jackson County.

**Hatcheries:** Directed reconstruction of structures at Carbon Hill Fish Hatchery following tornado damage; Completed designs and did renovation administration for residences at the Marion State Fish Hatchery.

**Fisheries:** Choctaw County-Tuscaloosa Boat Ramp and Parking Lot: design and contract administration; Tuscaloosa Boat Ramp: Completed construction; Binion Creek Boat Ramp, Tuscaloosa County: Construction administration, lot resurfacing and striping plan; Shoal Creek Boat Ramp: Construction project administration; Marshall County-Minky Creek Boat Ramp: lot resurfacing design and contract administration; Claysville Boat Ramp parking lot: Administered paving contract; Water Front Parking Lot, Town Creek Parking Lot: Resurfacing, contract administration.

**Law Enforcement:** Provided digital files for hunter education and location maps; provided digital state WMA map for the Department of Transportation; performed property line surveys for numerous properties under the control of this division.

**Wildlife:** Continued GIS discussion and application work; updated/produced all state WMA maps; produced statewide management area map inserts; aided in other various projects for this section including digitizing and acreage determination; continued surveyed property line at the James D. Martin/Skyline WMA; performed survey work.

## Future Plans

- Continue assistance and coordination of Hurricane Ivan repairs, coordinating with FEMA and insurance settlement.
- Continue surveying property lines for State Parks, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and other critical locations involving the department.
- Provide master planning, programming, design and contract administration for future construction projects including the ongoing renovation program of the State Parks Division and other divisions, surveys of public access areas, maintenance of existing department facilities, and design and construction of new facilities when possible.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The Information and Education Section provides information, education and outreach services for the Department. Informational services include print and electronic media such as *Outdoor Alabama* magazine for paid subscribers; *Outdoor Alabama* television, which airs weekly to a national audience; news releases distributed to state and national media outlets; brochures; press kits; and special video productions.

Educational services include comprehensive K-12 conservation education curricula and teacher training programs; in-school conservation programs; and hands-on field trips for students. Last year 458 educators completed inservice workshops offered by the Department.

Outreach services include the Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt; STEP OUTSIDE, a mentor-based program to introduce newcomers to hunting, fishing and other nature-based recreation; and Becoming an Outdoors-Woman weekend seminars.

In addition, I&E provided public relations and publishing consultation as well as editorial, proofreading, and copy writing service for departmental staff; responded to information requests from the public, media and other agencies; drafted communiqués for department administrators and the Governor's office; coordinated special projects; and acted as liaison to the Governor's Press Office.

## Facilities and Personnel

I&E had 11 authorized and filled positions during FY 2003-2004: a Biologist IV who served as section chief; a Public Information Manager who served as managing editor; a Public Information Specialist II who served as staff writer; a Public Information Specialist I who served as staff writer; one Artist-Illustrator II who served as graphic artist; two Conservation Education Specialists who coordinated workshops within assigned regions; an Audio-Visual Specialist III who served as videographer; two Administrative Support Assistant IIIs; and one Laborer.



***Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop.***

## Accomplishments

I&E provided service, material and/or coordination for promotion of the Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt, state-wide youth wildlife art contests, Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshops, Beyond BOW ladies' deer hunts, and STEP OUTSIDE Youth Dove Hunts and many other special projects. Photographic and audiovisual services were provided as needed.

*Outdoor Alabama* magazine published five issues including the annual Calendar and Conservation Directory. Subscriptions continued to grow thanks to promotions targeted at potential new subscribers and the option of purchasing subscriptions online with a credit card.

## Future Plans

- The section continues to produce film footage for the *Outdoor Alabama* television show. Plans are to syndicate the show on local stations around the state.
- An *Outdoor Alabama* Nature Shop will be available online and at special events.
- *Outdoor Alabama* magazine will continue working to increase the number of paid subscriptions to the magazine through a variety of promotional projects.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Section was established in December 2000 to promote technological growth within the Department. The mission of the Information Technology Section is to provide quality and reliable computer hardware, software, training, and network services to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The Information Technology Section is housed in the Folsom Administrative Building in Montgomery and has a staff of six.

Many changes were made within the Information Technology Section to improve the quality and quantity of services being provided. The section plans to continue expanding services to central office personnel as well as DCNR field employees at district offices and parks throughout the state.

## LEGAL

The Legal Section provides advice and counsel directly to the Commissioner and Operations Chief, and as a staff function, provides legal services to the directors of the five operational divisions and other Department staff.

The drafting of contracts, deeds, leases, patents, permits and attorney general opinions are also responsibilities of the Legal Section. Litigation against the Department and employees as well as litigation initiated by the Department is handled by the legal staff.

The Legal Section drafts, reviews and monitors legislation affecting the Department. Regulations for management and enforcement efforts of divisions are drafted and approved for execution and followed through the adoption process. The section is responsible for real estate transactions involving land owned or managed by the Department and for the legal work associated with the state's oil and gas leasing activity.

## PERSONNEL AND PAYROLL

The Personnel and Payroll Section provides personnel-related support services to the commissioner's office, division directors and Administrative Division section chiefs.

The section serves as liaison to the State Personnel Department for all of DCNR's personnel actions and activities.

The processing of payroll and maintenance of all employee files and payroll records for the Department's hourly and bi-weekly personnel is also the responsibility of the section.

## Accomplishments

New equipment and software have been purchased to more efficiently produce identification cards for DCNR employees. Plans are underway to get new cards for all permanent field personnel.

## Future Plans

The Personnel and Payroll section is committed to continue to provide payroll and personnel support services throughout the Department.

# Marine Police



The Marine Police Division provides public safety services for approximately 1 million boaters on the state's more than 1 million surface acres of recreational waters through a comprehensive program of enforcement and public education. This program is handled in the field by less than 60 Marine Police Officers using one-officer patrol craft and covering over 23,000 surface acres per officer. Field enforcement is the responsibility of the Chief Enforcement Officer; field district supervisors and the Chief of Operations report directly to him. Education, administrative concerns, supply/inventory, and marine maintenance comprise the Chief of Operations' responsibilities. An education officer, a supply/inventory officer, clerical personnel, marine mechanics and laborers make up the Chief of Operations' staff.

The administrative unit provides budgetary, fiscal, logistical and maintenance support. The boat registration unit is responsible for registration and records retention of approximately 400,000 boats. The boat registration unit also supports the boat theft unit, which consists of two Marine Police officers assigned statewide. Recovery of stolen property such as boats, motors and accessory equipment is a function of the boat theft unit.

Functions of the Marine Police Division, in addition to routine safety patrol, include registration of all pleasure boats, licensing of all boat operators, boat and marine accessory theft, a statewide Boating Education Program, and assisting other state, local and federal officers in enforcement relating to homeland security, maritime and waterway smuggling, drug interdiction, and other serious crimes committed in the marine environment. The Marine Police Division is also charged with the establishment and overview of a waterway hazard and control marking program, presently overseeing 2,000 hazard and control markers and zones.

## Facilities and Personnel

The Marine Police Division maintains headquarters, a maintenance shop and warehouse in Montgomery. A training facility at Orange Beach is used for training and in-service training. The state is divided into four districts for enforcement purposes. District headquarters are maintained at Lake Guntersville State Park, Alpine, Wind Creek State Park, and Alabama Point. These headquarters provide contact sites for the boating public, education program locations, and training facilities for district personnel. In FY 2003-2004, the Marine Police Division operated with 78 employees statewide. This included 62 uniformed officers, 11 clerical personnel, three marine mechanics, one laborer, and the division director. One officer transferred from the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division to the Marine Police Division and in June 2004, six new Marine

Police Officers were employed.

On July 27, 2004, the new Marine Police Maintenance Facility was dedicated as the William B. Garner Alabama Marine Police Maintenance Facility. This facility has been a goal for the Marine Police Division for the past decade. Tribute was paid to William B. Garner, who has dedicated his career to furthering boating safety, not only for the citizens of Alabama, but for boaters nationwide.

## Budget and Expenditures

For FY 2003-2004, the Marine Police Division was authorized a budget of \$7,087,360. Total expenditures amounted to \$6,600,835. These funds were generated from boat registration fees, enforcement fines, marine fuel tax, and the boating safety assistance program from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Coast Guard.

## Significant Accomplishments

- More than 31,104 persons successfully completed the Basic Boating Course taught by Marine Police officers in 2004.
- Boat operator licenses were issued to 31,347 boat operators in 2004. A total of 531,448 operator licenses are currently on file.
- Marine Police Officers statewide participated in Operation Liberty Shield, checking potentially vulnerable water infrastructures.
- In August 2004, Marine Police Officers provided enforcement and crowd control at the Alabama-based Offshore Super Powerboat Race. There were 3,400 spectators in boats and thousands more on shore for this event.
- Alabama Power Company contributed a \$35,000 grant to be used to promote public safety on the 12 Alabama Power Company impoundments.
- Constructed new boat maintenance facility in Montgomery.
- Purchased new headquarters/training facility at Alabama Point.
- Implemented marine sanitation device inspection program.
- Implemented the L.E.T.S. program which enables Marine Police Officers to access boat registration and other records as needed.

## 2003-2004 Marine Police Law Enforcement Statistics

- **Patrol**..... 26,017 hours
- **Search and Rescue  
and Assists to Boaters** ..... 296 hours
- **Vessel Contacts** ..... 16,948
- **Arrests** ..... 2,498  
82 for boating under the influence of alcohol  
63 for illegal possession of drugs
- **Written Warnings** ..... 4,170
- **Boat Operator Licenses  
Suspended or Revoked** ..... 43
- **Boating Accidents** ..... 98
- **Fatalities** ..... 21

## Enforcement

During FY 2003-2004, Marine Police Officers were on patrol for 26,017 hours. There were 16,948 vessel contacts that resulted in 2,498 arrests and 4,170 written warnings; 82 arrests were made for boating under the influence of alcohol; 168 hours were spent in assisting with drug interdictions resulting in 63 arrests for illegal possession of drugs; and 43 boat operator licenses were suspended or revoked.

Marine Police officers performed 296 hours of search and rescue and assists to boaters. Marine Police officers were called upon by other law enforcement agencies for 285 hours of assistance with various duties. There were 80 marine events permitted by the Division, resulting in 452 hours of security patrol.

Marine Police officers are still under orders to patrol all critical infrastructure sites on the water that are considered to be potential terrorist targets. All officers have received training on the deployment of special teams in the event of terrorist threat. Approximately 2,966 hours were expended on Homeland Security patrols.

The Boat Theft Investigators opened 77 new cases of boat theft in 2004.

Officers investigated 98 boating accidents that resulted in 21 fatalities for the fiscal year.

The Disaster Response Team is comprised of 21 officers from all areas of the state. The DRT responds to emergency situations such as floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes or by an activation call from Emergency

Management Services. In the wake of Hurricane Ivan, the DRT members, as well as the officers located in the Alabama Point headquarters, performed search and rescue operations along the coastal areas (on land and water), formed patrols to prevent looting, manned road-blocks and Emergency Operations Centers, and were called to Covington and the surrounding counties to assist in the flood prevention operation

## Public Education

The Education Section of the Alabama Marine Police Division is continuing a joint cooperative venture with the State Department of Education, Driver Education Section, with the implementation of the boating education taught in the driver education classes. Compliance increased during the 2003-2004 school year. Work is continuing to achieve the 100 percent participation, which was mandated by the Boating Safety Reform Act of 1994. Marine Police furnishes training to the driver education instructors and participates in a series of workshops at various sites throughout the state. Marine Police is also furnishing instructional materials such as manuals, pamphlets, videos and speakers to ensure a successful program.

The Marine Police Division and the Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, continue to work together to license the boaters of Alabama. The Marine Police Division is provides the training for the driver license examiners and study guides for applicants to study for the written exam, which is conducted by the Department of Public Safety.

Statewide issuance of the boat operator's license continues to increase with a total of 31,347 licenses being issued for this reporting period. A concentrated radio, TV, and media blitz has continued to encourage the boating community to come in compliance with the vessel license requirement.

Marine Police personnel taught a total of 98 boating courses during the year 2004. Officers conducted 706 public education programs and presentations with 141,923 persons in attendance. Marine Police patrol equipment and static displays were manned at public schools, boat shows, safety fairs, and other functions throughout the state.

Radio and television appearances by Marine Police officers amounted to 213; in addition, 498 newspaper articles and magazine articles were published statewide. Time expended on educational functions by the officers totaled 5,990 hours; 90,000 units of boating literature were distributed to the public; 751 hours were dedicated to placing, replacing, and repairing 458 aids to navigation on Alabama's waterways. The state approved online boating course, [www.boat-ed.com](http://www.boat-ed.com), which was implemented as another alternative for the vessel license requirement, continues to receive a healthy response with 6,863 certifications being generated. Additional printed materials and

videos were acquired for use in providing public education for the marine community.

Marine Police Officers have worked closely with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management in the implementation of the Marine Sewage Act of October 2003. The officers have been enforcing the Marine Sanitation Act as it pertains to the regulating of boat sewage discharge. This includes prohibiting the docking, storing, anchoring or mooring of vessels with a type III marine sanitation device (MSD) at marinas without a pump-out or waste disposal system (except in emergency situations); 711 MSD inspections were conducted on both recreational and residential vessels and yearly inspection decals were issued.

Marine Police Officers have also been working closely with Lands' Coastal Section with the development and implementation of the Clean Marina Act.

During National Safety Boating Week, May 22-28, 2004, the Alabama Marine Police, through a partnership with the Alabama Children's Water Safety Task Force, began a life jacket give-away program for children. Under this program, when a Marine Police Officer cites or warns a boat operator for having children onboard without a life jacket (or one that is sized to fit), the officer gives that child a sized-to-fit life jacket. This program proved to be successful in raising awareness about children and life jackets, and many children who did not have an adequate life jacket, received one.

## Boat Registration

The Boat Registration Section is responsible for registration and records retention of approximately 400,000 boats. The total number of boats registered in FY 2003-2004 was 264,011. In addition, 26,644 ownership transfers were processed. Alabama ranks 17th in the nation for total number of vessels registered. The boat registration unit also supports the boat theft unit, which consists of two Marine Police officers assigned statewide.

## Significant Problems/Solutions

The most significant problem facing the Marine Police Division is a critical shortage of enforcement personnel. In order to address this problem, a source of funding must be found. Thirty additional officers will be needed over the next four years to bring the Division to an effective level. The cost to accomplish this is estimated at \$1.5 million. With the additional responsibility of providing security and surveillance for critical infrastructure sites on the water in partnership with the Homeland Security Department, at least a 50 percent increase in personnel is necessary. At the present time, no additional funding has been provided through Homeland Security.

Capturing boat registration data on the Marine Police Division's antiquated computer program/system is becoming increasingly difficult. A customized program/system is needed not only to import data electronically from the counties, but to capture and store data entered in-house and collected from the counties in the form of tapes and other media. This new system would facilitate accurate data reporting for fiscal, informational, and enforcement purposes. Increasing the cost of boat registrations is a funding source that should be considered.

## Future Plans

The Division goals and objectives for fiscal year 2004-2005 are as follows:

- Fill seven Marine Police Officer vacancies.
- Reduce boating fatalities.
- Reduce boating injuries.
- License 20,000 boat operators.
- Update antiquated boat registration system.



# Marine Resources

The Marine Resources Division (MRD) is responsible for the management of Alabama's marine fisheries resources through research and enforcement programs. Two division facilities supported an average of 54 employees of the Administrative, Enforcement, and Fisheries Sections during fiscal year 2004.

## Significant Accomplishments

A program aimed at the elimination of derelict crab traps in Alabama's coastal waters was completed for a second year and resulted in the removal of 418 derelict traps in the spring of 2004. This program followed the overwhelming success of the 2003 program which resulted in the removal of 1,074 traps. The reduction of traps from 2003 to 2004 is a result of the cooperation of everyone involved with the program. More volunteers had to go farther to collect fewer traps. The program will be considered for reimplementation in 2005. In addition to the improved habitat, reduced navigational hazard and the reduction in bycatch mortality, this program also serves to bring together numerous agencies, universities, commercial fishermen and civic groups as well as division personnel.

A three-year no trawl study area was created in upper Mobile Bay and Grand Bay. For the duration of this study, no trawling will be permitted in the affected areas. This study is being conducted to ascertain the effects of the no-trawl zone on marine organism recruitment, seagrass bed enhancement with subsequent improvement in nursery areas, and reduced user conflicts in these areas. This area was created through the cooperation of commercial shrimp fishermen and recreational fishermen with the Marine Resources Division personnel.

Enforcement officers continued to improve and expand the Coastwatch Program by training citizens to recognize and report violations of saltwater fishing laws and regulations. Information from Coastwatch members has been valuable in enforcement patrol planning, and deployment of manpower and other resources resulting in saved man-hours by not responding to inaccurate reports of violations. To date, 198 citizens have been trained at 30 training sessions held in Mobile, Baldwin, and Jefferson counties. The response to the program continues to be very positive.

The U.S. Department of Commerce appropriations budget for the 2004 fiscal year contained \$15 million earmarked for cooperative enforcement initiatives between NOAA law enforcement and state fisheries law enforcement entities. The Marine Resources Division and NOAA Enforcement entered into a joint enforcement agreement pursuant to the initiative. As part of the agreement, federal dollars are dedicated to increase fisheries law

enforcement efforts and compliance with federal fishery regulations along coastal Alabama and the Gulf of Mexico. Fisheries resources are cooperatively protected, managed, and conserved by state and federal governments.

The MRD enforcement section received \$600,000 as part of the agreement. The money will be used to purchase one offshore vessel, and surveillance equipment that will be strategically located in coastal Alabama. Additionally, it provided funding to increase patrol hours for MRD officers.

The facilities for red snapper brood fish maturation studies recently completed at the CPMC have resulted in the increased production of red snapper fingerlings. The production of these fingerlings by naturally spawning fish has enabled continued cooperative research to occur between the MRD, Auburn University, and Alma Bryant High School. A pumping system and pipeline that extends from the Gulf of Mexico at the Gulf State Park Pier to the CPMC. This project was funded by Coastal Impact Assistance Program funds. It enhanced the development of red snapper production at CPMC by providing a supply of high salinity water.

The fifth year of a cooperative project with Auburn University at CPMC has resulted in refined techniques for raising shrimp in ponds. These will be used to enhance the production of shrimp on the shrimp farms in west central Alabama.

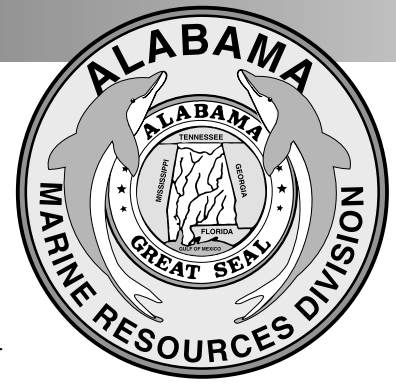
## Budget and Expenditures

A total expenditure of \$4,259,412 was made from the approved budget of \$5,563,997. Revenue of \$4,839,785 was made up from federal aid (47 percent), license fees (37 percent), marine gas tax (13 percent), and other sources (3 percent). This plus a cash forward balance of \$1,522,189 provided funding of \$6,361,974 for the fiscal year.

The Administrative Section expended \$1,671,992 of salaries and operational expenses for division activities.

Expenditures for the Enforcement Section totaled \$1,068,861, of which \$24,345 was reimbursable by a grant from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and \$300,000 was reimbursable under a Joint Enforcement Agreement from NOAA/Office of Law Enforcement.

Fisheries Section expenditures were \$1,518,559 which consisted of funds from seventeen federal aid programs and required state matching funds. Federal aid projects varied in state match requirements from zero to 25 percent. Included in these expenditures, in addition to the nor-



mal expenditure were shell planting activities, and boating access area up-keep, renovation, and construction.

### Significant Problems and Solutions

The lack of adequate quantities of high salinity, high quality water for rearing of marine fishes such as red snapper at the CPMC was solved during FY 2004. A portion of the CIAP monies was used to construct a pipeline from the Gulf State Park pier to CPMC to solve this problem. This pipeline was completed in the spring of 2004. However, Hurricane Ivan destroyed the intake structure, the pump station, and portions of the pipeline. This will be repaired with FEMA monies after the Gulf State Park pier is relocated to serve for attachment of the intake structure.

There is a need for authority to allow offenses committed in the Gulf of Mexico outside of the state's territorial waters to be heard in state district court. This could be accomplished by amending regulation 9-12-4.

There currently is no way to track the recreational effort expended against the marine resources with the use of gig, castnet, recreational crab traps, or spearfishing. These fishing gears need to be added to the recreational fishing license at no additional fee by amending 9-11-53.1 and 9-12-55.2.

At present commercial fishermen can not legally sell fish caught in cast nets or with gigs because of a lack of a commercial license for this activity. A commercial license should be established for these activities.

### ADMINISTRATION SECTION

The Administrative Section provides supervision, clerical, purchasing, and general administrative support for the two operational sections; supervises state seismic activities; and coordinates with other state, federal and regional agencies on fisheries and environmental matters.

Staff for the Administrative Section consisted of the division director, 7 clerical, one accountant, one custodial worker, and one marine mechanic employee. Offices are maintained at Dauphin Island, and Gulf Shores.

### Accomplishments

Construction was completed of a pumping system and pipeline that extends from the Gulf of Mexico at the Gulf State Park Pier to CPMC. This project was funded by CIAP funds. It enhanced the development of red snapper production at CPMC by providing a supply of high salinity water. However, Hurricane Ivan destroyed the intake structure, the pump station, and portions of the pipeline. This will be repaired with FEMA monies after the Gulf State Park pier is relocated to serve for attachment of the intake structure. It is estimated that it will take two years to repair the structure.

The U.S. Department of Commerce appropriations budget for the 2004 fiscal year contained \$15 million earmarked for cooperative enforcement initiatives between

### 2003-2004

### Marine Resources Law Enforcement Statistics

<b>Patrol</b> .....	11,074 Hours
<b>Boat Checks</b> .....	6,381
<b>Seafood Shop Inspections</b> .....	1,098
<b>Recreational Fisherman Checks</b> .....	12,022
<b>Citations and Warnings</b> .....	1,371

NOAA law enforcement and state fisheries law enforcement entities. The Marine Resources Division and NOAA Enforcement entered into a joint enforcement agreement pursuant to the initiative. As part of the agreement, federal dollars are dedicated to increase fisheries law enforcement efforts and compliance with federal fishery regulations along coastal Alabama and the Gulf of Mexico. Fisheries resources are cooperatively protected, managed, and conserved by state and federal governments. The MRD enforcement section received \$600,000 as part of the agreement. The money will be used to purchase one off-shore vessel, and surveillance equipment that will be strategically located in coastal Alabama. Additionally, it provided funding to increase patrol hours for MRD officers.

The 2004 edition of the popular Alabama Marine Information Calendar was produced and distributed. In addition, a calendar depicting conservation related artwork by coastal 4th and 5th graders was produced and printed by the division. The artwork for the calendar was selected through an art contest, hosted by the Division and judged by local specialists in coastal conservation and the arts. The winning selections were also displayed in art museums in both Mobile and Baldwin counties. Receptions were held at each museum for the winning students, their friends, and families.

The success of the electronic trip ticket computer program continues to grow. Currently 23 Alabama seafood dealers are online with this program. These dealers contribute substantial amounts of landings data to MRD. The computer program allows seafood dealers to enter landings and trip information from commercial fishermen and submit it electronically on a monthly basis.

### Future Plans

- If after studying the areas in upper Mobile Bay and Grand Bay, the closures seem to be improving the grass beds, and shrimp and finfish production for Alabama fishermen, the areas will be permanently closed.

- Plans are in place to continue work at the Pier Street ramp in Fairhope during the next fiscal year with the addition of a breakwater.
- The Division plans to complete its Coastal Impact Assistance Program project during fiscal year 2005.
- Attempts will be made to extend the jurisdiction of District Courts to offenses committed offshore from Alabama in addition to those committed fully within Alabama's territorial sea.

## ENFORCEMENT SECTION

The Enforcement Section patrols Alabama's coastal waters, enforcing state and federal laws and regulations relating to the conservation and protection of marine resources. Officers also enforce laws and regulations relating to boating safety and freshwater fishing and hunting, conduct search and rescue missions, and participate in drug interdiction operations. Officers are cross-trained and deputized as National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Customs agents and cooperate extensively with these agencies and other Federal agencies in the coordination of joint enforcement operations, investigative and fisheries enforcement expertise, training, public safety, and other natural resource issues.

Facilities for the Enforcement Section consist of headquarters at Dauphin Island and a district office in Gulf Shores. There are 17 enforcement officers in the section, 10 stationed in Mobile County, six stationed in Baldwin County, and the Chief Enforcement Officer stationed at Dauphin Island headquarters. One vacancy was filled in FY2003-2004 and one additional position for Baldwin County is scheduled to be filled in FY2004-2005.

## Accomplishments

Enforcement officers conducted 11,074 hours of boat and shore patrol, 6,381 boat checks, 1,098 seafood shop inspections, 12,022 recreational fisherman checks, and issued 1,371 citations and warnings for illegal activities. Twenty-nine percent of the citations and warnings (399) were for violations of recreational fishing laws and regulations. The 526 violations of commercial fishing laws and regulations comprised 38 percent of the citations and warnings issued. Officers also issued citations and warnings for 279 violations of boating safety laws and regulations, 70 wildlife and freshwater fisheries violations, and 97 citations for other state and federal laws and regulations. A total of 14,203.5 hours was spent on administrative duties, court attendance, training, and equipment maintenance. Officers worked 1,512.5 hours with the National Marine Fisheries Services interjurisdictional fisheries enforcement program.

Enforcement officers assisted with the relief efforts after hurricane Ivan severely damaged the Alabama Coastal areas. Marine Resources Enforcement officers assisted

police departments in Mobile and Baldwin Counties by providing additional security to prevent looting, assisted with the distribution of food, water, and other supplies, provided manpower for check points, provided marine security and transport, and provided enforcement manpower to assist with additional enforcement requirements.

Officers attended training courses on boat handling, criminal investigation, self-defense, supervision, and other state and federal agency law enforcement programs.

Officers continued to enhance public outreach efforts to better communicate enforcement efforts to provide important information and to foster cooperative management initiatives.

## Future Plans

- Continue to develop mechanisms to improve the Coastwatch program and public outreach efforts to better communicate enforcement efforts and important information.
- Continue to develop procedures to enhance the Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA, assure that such agreements are implemented in future years, and seek long term funding for agreements.
- Work with other Gulf states and the National Marine Fisheries Service to implement the Gulfwide strategic fisheries enforcement plan.
- Continue to develop procedures and provide officers with training to enhance Homeland Defense activities.
- Continue to foster efforts to allow the prosecution of violations in federal waters in the District Court System in Alabama.

## FISHERIES SECTION

The activities of the Fisheries Section are directed toward management of commercial and recreational fisheries in Alabama's marine and estuarine waters. These activities involve cooperative efforts with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in nearshore Federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico and with other Gulf of Mexico state agencies to develop cooperative fisheries management programs. These activities are mostly funded through federal aid programs of the U.S. Departments of Commerce (NOAA/NMFS) and Interior (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Biological programs not covered by federal aid such as fish kill evaluation, oyster management, shrimp management efforts, and pollution investigations are supported by commercial and recreational license fees. Section personnel also assist in oversight of natural gas activities within Alabama's coastal waters, territorial sea, and adjacent federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico and comment on applications for U.S. Army Corps of Engineer permits in the coastal area.

Fisheries facilities consist of the CPMC in Gulf Shores and the MRD Laboratory on Dauphin Island. Personnel consist of one Biologist V, one Biologist IV, one Biologist III, four Biologist IIs, one Biologist I, five Biologist Aides III, eleven Biologist Aides I/II, one ASA I/II, two bi-weekly laborers, and three temporary laborers.

## Accomplishments

The facilities for red snapper brood fish maturation studies recently completed at the CPMC have resulted in the increased production of red snapper fingerlings. The production of these fingerlings by naturally spawning fish has enabled continued cooperative research to occur between the MRD, Auburn University, and Alma Bryant High School. A pumping system and pipeline that extends from the Gulf of Mexico at the Gulf State Park Pier to the CPMC. This project was funded by CIAP funds. It enhanced the development of red snapper production at CPMC by providing a supply of high salinity water. However, Hurricane Ivan destroyed the intake structure, the pump station, and portions of the pipeline. This will be repaired with FEMA monies after the Gulf State Park pier is relocated to serve for attachment of the intake structure.

The fifth year of a cooperative project with Auburn University has resulted in refined techniques for raising shrimp in ponds. These will be used to enhance the production of shrimp in the shrimp farms of north central Alabama.

In 2004, the Division participated in the Alabama-Mississippi Rapid Assessment Team (AMRAT) to search for aquatic invasive species. This is the second year of the assessment which was initially conducted in Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound in 2003 and was conducted in Mississippi waters in 2004. Some known invasive species were identified. The introduction of invasive species is a threat to biodiversity and nationwide costs billions of dollars annually to remove or reduce well maintained populations. The rapidity of this team enhances collaborative efforts within the region and may identify problem species before they become well established.

The fifth year of a cooperative project with Auburn University has resulted in refined techniques for raising shrimp in ponds. These will be used to enhance the production of shrimp in the shrimp farms in west central Alabama.

Four new concrete fishing reefs were constructed in the nearshore Gulf, along the remnants of a "trolling corridor" built in the mid-1990s by the Division in cooperation with the Orange Beach Fishing Association. The concrete materials for these four new reefs came from the demolition of the old Gulf State Park Beach Pavilion. Two hundred twenty-two new concrete and steel pyramid reefs were deployed in a grid fashion offshore in Alabama's reef areas. These reef modules are about 10 feet tall, weigh about 5,000 pounds each, and are covered on each side with perforated plate steel up to one inch thick. The mod-

ules were distributed from east to west and shallow to deep to spread out the fishing effort over the widest possible area.

During the year 841 fisheries assessment samples were taken. This data is part of a long-term data base that lets managers review the populations of lower trophic level species to detect any changes before they reach the recreational and commercial important species. A total of 91 habitat assessments were performed, and 4,477 fishermen were interviewed during creel surveys.

## Federal Aid

**Wallop/Breaux:** Wallop/Breaux funds are administered through the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funds used from this source by the MRD were directed toward a creel survey of Alabama's saltwater recreational anglers, production of the 2004 edition of the popular Alabama Marine Information Calendar, production of the new children's coastal conservation art calendar, construction of artificial fishing reefs in the Gulf of Mexico off Alabama, maintaining equipment and facilities in Gulf Shores and Dauphin Island, managing the public artificial fishing reef permits issuing system in the Gulf of Mexico off Alabama, assisting individuals in designing artificial reefs, conducting mariculture research on red snapper, maintaining and enhancing boat ramps for boating access, conducting a study of the attraction of juvenile red snapper to small patch reefs, sampling coastal Alabama fishes to determine stock status, and testing various offshore artificial reef modules with respect to attractant qualities and durability. An additional project to coordinate all federal aid programs within the MRD and coordinate with other Gulf states was also funded from this source.

Personnel also revised the Alabama Marine Resources Activity Book, which provides an interactive format for educating elementary students about the life cycles and habits of local organisms.

Wallop/Breaux funds are administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funds used from this source by the MRD were directed toward a fisheries independent assessment and monitoring program that samples fishes and invertebrates from the lower trophic levels and serve as a source of forage for most commercially and recreationally important marine species, a creel survey of Alabama's saltwater recreational anglers, production of the 2004 edition of the popular Marine Information Calendar, construction of artificial fishing reefs in the Gulf of Mexico offshore from Alabama and inshore in Mobile Bay, maintaining equipment and facilities in Gulf Shores and Dauphin Island, managing the public artificial fishing reef permits issuing system in the Gulf of Mexico off Alabama, assisting individuals in designing artificial reefs, conducting mariculture research on red snapper, maintaining and enhancing boat ramps for boating access, conducting a study of the attraction of juvenile red snapper to small patch reefs, and testing various offshore artificial

reef modules with respect to attractant qualities and durability. An additional project to coordinate all federal aid programs within the MRD and coordinate with other Gulf states was also funded from this source.

**Adult Finfish Sampling Program:** Alabama's MRD continues a fishery independent gillnet sampling program. The objective is to gather data on adult fish to be used in the management of important species. Sampling is being conducted through the use of two gillnet configurations and a stratified random design. In 2004, 6,315 finfish representing 50 species were collected. Under contract with the National Marine Fisheries Service, 270 tissue samples were collected from 11 species for total mercury content. Cooperating with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, 59 samples from 6 species of harvestable size fish were also tested for total mercury.

**Cooperative Statistics:** Federal aid funds for this program are administered by the Department of Commerce (NOAA/NMFS) and are utilized by the MRD to collect fisheries-dependent data on commercial shrimp, oyster, crab and finfish landings. Additionally, information on processed seafood such as crab meat and mullet is compiled. Biological information was collected on striped mullet, flounder, Spanish mackerel, grouper, and red snapper. Commercial seafood license information was stored on MRD computers in a specifically designed database.



**Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP):** Funds from this program are administered by the Department of Commerce (NOAA/NMFS) and are utilized in Alabama for the development of a long term fishery-independent data base on recreationally and commercially important marine and estuarine fishery stocks. This project provides funds to assist in management of the Alabama shrimp fishery and evaluate spawning success and juvenile survival for important recreational and commercial species. It also provides funds for a project to independently assess the local red snap-

per population by video camera and fish trap sampling. Work is conducted in Alabama's offshore artificial reef permit areas in the Gulf of Mexico.

**The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS):** All quotas established by the NMFS were met or exceeded in 2003. Division Personnel completed 2,133 fishermen interviews. Through August 2004, the most recent data available, over 146,000 fish were identified representing 67 species and of these, 6,597 fish were measured. The Division completed an economic add-on survey representing a calendar year of information in August. The quota in private boat mode was not met in Wave 1, 2004 due to a rainy February and the quotas for shore mode and charter mode in Wave 5, 2004 were not met due to Hurricane Ivan.

**Otolith Sampling Program:** AMRD continued collection of otoliths (ear stones) primarily from red snapper, greater amberjack, king mackerel, and southern and gulf flounder caught by commercial and recreational fishermen. Otoliths are used to age fish. A total of 3,070 otoliths were collected in fiscal year 2004. A paper was presented at the red snapper SEDAR meeting discussing possible discrepancies in the ageing of red snapper.

**Commercial Trip Ticket Program:** Funding for this program is provided through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. This program is part of a Gulf-wide effort to generate more specific information for each commercial fishery by collecting landings and effort data from each fishing trip. Trip tickets are printed in triplicate form and supplied to Alabama seafood dealers. Seafood dealers are required to complete the trip ticket for each transaction. An alternative form of submission is through an electronic entry program which allows seafood dealers to enter landings and trip information and submit it via the internet on a monthly basis. Data from the completed trip tickets are scanned into a computer, verified and edited. Monthly data is sent to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and will ultimately be supplied to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

**Coastal Impact Assessment Program (CIAP):** CIAP funds, administered through the Lands Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources were utilized in a program to remove derelict crab traps from Alabama coastal waters and beaches. The program resulted in the removal of 1,074 derelict traps. CIAP funds used to date have also provide two renovated boat ramps and several inshore and offshore artificial reefs.

## Non-Federal Aid

**Alabama Oyster Reef Enhancement:** A formally barren bottom and a marginally productive oyster reef in Portersville Bay, Mississippi Sound, Alabama, were planted with a total of 20,000 cubic yards of oyster cultch material in 2002 to enhance oyster growth and create a new reef in this formally productive section of Alabama

waters. Both areas were surveyed by dredge in July 2003 and had caught an excellent spat set. Oysters in this area should be of harvestable size in late summer 2004.

Biological and enforcement personnel worked together to collect data at oyster checkpoints, enabling the development of sound management measures for sustaining the oyster resources. Data collected assisted in increasing the accuracy of assessment of the status of Alabama oyster stocks.

The MRD also continued the cooperative endeavor with Auburn University and the new Alma May Bryant High School in Mobile County to provide a mariculture training center at the high school. This continues to be a very successful program which expands students' ability to participate in future fisheries.

## Future Plans

- The Fisheries Section will continue to collect appropriate data and work with recreational and commercial fishermen and other resource user groups to provide Division administrators with recommendations for strategies and regulations for management.
- Development of mariculture procedures for commercially and recreationally important marine organisms will continue. Cooperative projects will continue to be initiated with Auburn University, the Dauphin Island Sealab, and the University of South Alabama.
- Development of mariculture procedures for commercially and recreationally important marine organisms will continue. This will be enhanced by the completion of a saltwater supply pipeline from the Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores to CPMC.
- Cooperative projects will continue to be initiated with Auburn University, the Dauphin Island Sealab, and the University of South Alabama to investigate artificial reef benefits and red snapper production enhancement. The Division will continue to construct inshore and offshore artificial reefs as materials and funding allow.
- Inshore assessment and monitoring work will be continued monthly with the addition of new stations in order to provide a more comprehensive depiction of Alabama's marine waters and resources.
- Continuation of the MRFSS in Alabama to include creels of anglers on charter boats, private boats, and shoreline and to continue the telephone survey to better define effort within the charter fishery.
- Continue collecting Alabama commercial seafood landings data via Alabama's Trip Ticket Program and to continue the collection of commercial biological fishery dependent data.
- Creation of artificial reefs in the Perdido Bay system to enhance inshore fishing opportunities for anglers in coastal Baldwin county.
- Renovation of Boggy Point Boat Ramp to include a new boat launching ramp and additional parking spaces for vehicle and trailers.



# State Lands

The State Lands Division (SLD) manages undeveloped, state-owned trust lands that are specific as to their identity as well as to the income beneficiary. The lands are currently identified as Sixteenth Section and Indemnity School Lands of approximately 30,000 acres; approximately 7,000 acres of Mental Health/Mental Retardation Department trust lands; Muscle Shoals Grant Lands of approximately 8,000 acres; and other lands, including submerged lands (inland and coastal) of approximately 600,000 acres. In addition, the SLD manages certain resources on University of Montevallo, Auburn University and Department of Transportation lands. Resource uses include oil and gas exploration and development, timber harvesting, farming, coal mining, hunting leases and commercial uses.

The SLD maintains the State Land Resource Information Center, which is the database of all lands owned by the State of Alabama and its departments, agencies and institutions. These records reflect lands acquired, owned, managed or disposed of by all state agencies and institutions. Records are submitted by each agency, checked against individual county tax assessment records and entered into the division's Geographic Information System database.

The Forever Wild Public Land Acquisition Program is managed by the SLD at the direction of the program's Board of Trustees. Division personnel provide administrative support including coordination of the assessment and appraisal process, purchase negotiations, land purchase transactions, budget preparation and annual reporting to the governor and legislature.

The SLD conducts sales of excess state lands pursuant to the State Land Sales and Leasing Act. This law establishes a procedure aimed at assuring that the state receives full fair market value for lands that it sells or leases and that the procedure is open, competitive and subject to public scrutiny.

Alabama's official natural heritage database is maintained by the SLD. Animal and plant species and areas of biological significance that make up the rich natural diversity of our state are identified and inventoried. This effort provides important biological information to conservation organizations, developers, governmental agencies and the public in general. It also complements the goals of Forever Wild.

The SLD fosters conservation education and research through programs offered at the Wehle Nature Centers in Bullock County and Baldwin County, the Weeks Bay Reserve in Baldwin County and the Foster Wetland Conservation Tract in Mobile County.

The SLD conducts coastal resource management and planning through the Alabama Coastal Area Management

Program (ACAMP).

The purpose of ACAMP is to promote, improve and safeguard the lands and waters located in Alabama's coastal area through a comprehensive and cooperative program designed to preserve, enhance and develop such valuable resources for the well-being of present and future generations. This program works in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, and is federally funded by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the Department of Commerce. This function complements the Division's responsibilities for management of submerged lands.

The SLD implements the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) for the State of Alabama. The CIAP is a federally funded program under NOAA designed to mitigate for impacts from Outer Continental Shelf activities. Specifically, the State of Alabama CIAP is comprised of 35 projects, approved by the governor and the Secretary of Commerce, aimed at conserving and enhancing natural resources in the two coastal counties – Baldwin and Mobile. The SLD administers all contracts associated with CIAP and coordinates closely with NOAA to ensure program compliance.

The SLD manages these responsibilities through three sections: Administrative, Natural Heritage and Coastal. Specific accomplishments by each section for this past year follow.

## Administrative Section Accomplishments

- Processed numerous nominations for sales and leases of state-owned land pursuant to the provisions of the State Land Sales and Leasing Act. Included in this activity was trust land leased for purposes of hunting.
- Processed a number of requests for oil, gas and mineral leases on state-owned lands including submerged water bottoms.
- Planned a beach nourishment project for the Gulf





State Park in conjunction with the municipalities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

- Administered the Forever Wild Land Trust program and facilitated the acquisition of the following 11 tracts of land totaling 17,250 acres:

- o Lillian Swamp-Caney Bayou Tract (Baldwin County) – 320 acres
- o Coldwater Mountain Addition-McCartney Tract (Calhoun County) – 280 acres
- o Weeks Bay Harris and Worcester Tracts (Baldwin County) – 113 acres
- o Jacob Farm Addition Tract (Jackson County) – 182 acres
- o Periwinkle Spring Addition Tract (Madison County) – 40 acres

- o Walls of Jericho Tract (Jackson County) – 12,510 acres
- o Jacinto Port – Uplands and Wetlands Tract (Mobile County) – 3,372 acres
- o Grand Bay Savanna Little River Road Addition (Mobile County) – 113 acres
- o Knotty Pine Tract (DeKalb County) – 45 acres
- o Splinter Hill Bog – IP Addition (Baldwin County) – 264 acres
- o Bon Secour Beck Tract – (Baldwin County) – 11 acres

- Continued implementation of the State of Alabama Coastal Impact Assistance Program. Accomplishments for this year include:

- o Participation in the acquisition of the Splinter Hill Bog - Ben May Tract and the Splinter Hill Bog – IP Addition Tract
- o Acquisition of covered camping platforms for the Bartram Canoe Trail in the Mobile Tensaw Delta
- o Resource enhancement projects including the establishment of a fire regime at the Grand Bay Savanna Tract in Mobile County
- o Initiated and funded a project to inventory exotic plant and animal communities in coastal Alabama
- Coordinated Departmental activities relating to the Natural Resource Damage Assessment program including site inspections and participation in Natural Resource Trustee Council meetings.
- Initiated planning activities related to the official opening of the Wehle Land Conservation Center in Bullock County.
- Opened Phase II of the Bartram Canoe Trail in the Mobile Tensaw Delta.
- Initiated sponsorship and planning activities for the First Annual Coastal Birdfest.
- Continued participation in partnership resource enhancement projects including the Marvel Slab removal project in Bibb County.
- Responded to numerous requests from agencies and the public regarding information contained in the Land Resource Information Center (LRIC) database. Staff also worked with a number of state agencies to update information regarding state land ownership.
- Field staff continued routine land management activities including boundary marking, timber cruising, prescribed burning and law enforcement.

## State Lands Division

Sources of Receipts	Total Income
Commercial Leases	\$56,980
Oil and Gas Leases (Royalties)	\$250,672,521
8(g) Payments	
(Federal offshore shares)	\$13,707,951
Timber Sales	\$226,216
Coal Leases	\$816,667
Coal Gas	\$450,716
Misc., Easements, Fees and Permits	\$1,246,665
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$267,177,716</b>

### Distribution of State Lands Division Receipts

Alabama Trust Fund	\$260,835,565
Department of Education	\$23,784
School Trust Lands	\$812,002
Auburn University	\$47,067
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Department	\$72,470

### Department of Conservation

State Lands Division	\$4,459,907
State Parks Division	\$13,813
Marine Resources	\$1,237

### Other State Agencies

Forestry Commission	\$10,689
Department of Transportation	\$224,298
Historical Commission	\$224,537
Forever Wild	\$149,150
Military Department	\$302,631
University of Montevallo	\$566

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$267,177,716</b>
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## Natural Heritage Section Accomplishments

- The Natural Heritage Section (NHS) Database was converted to Microsoft Access, which is more compatible with other agencies and contract researchers. Work has begun with the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries to incorporate their data from past projects and future.
- Staff biologists began collecting detailed GPS/GIS data of the Forever Wild tracts to aid with the management and research of these tracts. Management action implementation included prescribed burns at Weeks Bay, Grand Bay Savanna and the Wehle Tract.
- Developed recreational trails for the Wehle Land Conservation Center Tract, the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and the Walls of Jericho Tract. These trails are available for public use.
- Personnel worked on fulfilling ACAMP \$50,000 grant obligations by conducting extensive bird surveys, monitoring coastal pitcher plant bogs, delineating fire lanes at Weeks Bay, the Helen Woods Tract and Gulf State Park.
- Personnel secured a \$250,000 federal research grant from the State Wildlife Grant Program through the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.
- Staff assisted in the acquisition of Forest Legacy funding for two areas within the state, including the Mobile-Tensaw Delta (\$1.2 million) and the Cumberland Plateau (\$1.2 million).
- Staff assisted in the submittal of new National Coastal Wetlands grants worth \$1,800,000 for two tracts along the Mobile County coast that compliment the Grand Bay Savanna Forever Wild Tracts.
- Personnel continued implementation of task items associated with the state's Coastal Impact and Assistance Program.
- Staff continued the process of reviewing new Forever Wild land nominations for biological diversity, ascertaining the status of all tract nomination's availability, and providing this information for Forever Wild meetings during the past year.
- Staff supplied information from the NHS database, along with numerous maps and other GIS products, in an effort to improve thorough review of development projects within the state.
- Staff continued active partnership involvement in various projects and programs including the Mitigation Bank Review Team, COE 206 Marvel Slab Project, Headwaters Riverine HGM COE project, as well as conducting BBS routes.

## Coastal Section Accomplishments

### Fairhope Office

- Celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program. The program was approved in September 1979 and this year marked 25 years of the Federal-State Cooperative Program that manages Alabama's coastal resources.
- The CZM program received \$1.8 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to operate and to fund projects in FY2005. Of this amount, approximately \$600,000 federal were distributed to local governments, universities, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and other public entities to conduct activities that directly affect the quality of life along the Alabama coast.
  - Projects include flora and fauna studies of the Mobile Tensaw Delta, a study of the underlying geology of the beaches and dunes along the Alabama coast, mapping of the wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation of Mobile and Baldwin counties, technological enhancement and planning grants to local coastal governments, watershed planning and non-point source pollution projects, and special education and outreach programs including sea turtle awareness and protection, sustainable tourism initiatives and the annual coastal cleanup.
- Coordinated the 17th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup, scheduled for September 18, 2004. Unfortunately, this event was cancelled due to Hurricane Ivan. However, the supplies used for the Coastal Cleanup (trash bags, water, t-shirts) were donated to the workers of coastal municipalities and power companies.
- Implemented public access improvements to six public water access sites in Mobile and Baldwin counties.
- Drafted the Alabama Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Implementation Strategy, which will facilitate land acquisition within the coastal watershed.
- Sponsored and assisted coordination and facilitation of the First Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest.
- Completed the first year of the second five-year session of the monthly National Marine Debris Monitoring Program. Data of this monitoring can be found at [www.oceanconservancy.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nationalmap](http://www.oceanconservancy.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nationalmap).
- Participated in 15 public education and outreach events including the Annual Bay Area Earth Day, Discovery Kids Day, Bird Awareness Day – Birding



at Blakeley, Cypress Tree Planting Day, and the Environmental Studies Center's Open Houses.

- Taught approximately 225 Baldwin County students from grades 3-8 the environmental science classroom lessons of Groundwater Pollution and Classroom in the Forest.
- Inducted the first two marinas into the Alabama-Mississippi Clean Marina Program, Zeke's Landing in Orange Beach and Dog River Marina in Mobile. Five other marinas have signed the pledge cards to enter the program.
- Facilitated a study of the Bay Minette Creek subwatershed.
- Sponsored Smart Growth Conference
- Sponsored coastal area workshops on stormwater best management practices and advanced stormwater design.

#### **Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve**

- Completed a Capitol Improvement Project of repairing a bulkhead at docking facility.
- Assisted in the acquisition of 81 acres of upland and wetland habitats on Fish River at Weeks Bay.
- Reserve Interpretive Center hosted an estimated 20,000 visitors from 50 states and over six countries from around the world.
- Coastal Training Program (CTP) for the Gulf Coast area of south Alabama moves forward with implementation of the CTP Marketing Plan through establishing partnerships and planning training topics for upcoming quarters.
- Hosted numerous educational workshops on topics including Application of Water Level and Datum Information to Coastal Zone Management,

Collaborative Problem Solving and Consensus Building in Watershed Planning, and Wetlands Delineation and Protection.

- Hosted a Weeks Bay Volunteer Appreciation Day in April for Volunteers.
- Educational staff hosted a teacher training workshop on topic of Teacher Development on Nonpoint Source Pollution;
- Hosted the Eleventh Annual Native Plant Sale that promotes landscaping with native plants.
- Research staff maintained System-wide Monitoring Project and coordinated with over 14 visiting researchers on eight different projects.
- Participated in AMRAT: the Alabama-Mississippi Rapid Assessment Team - assessment of Mobile Bay on the plant team. This was a rapid assessment for invasive species.
- Completed restoration on the Weeks Bay Nature Trail Restoration Project with funding from the Gulf of Mexico Foundation. This project is ongoing whereby monitoring will continue after initial restoration utilizing volunteer efforts.
- Initiated two new Graduate Research Fellowships in June of this year. Student researchers are working on the following topics: 1) "Benthic Algal Community Structure and Bioaccumulation of Mercury in a Coastal Watershed," and 2) the "Effects of Habitat Type on Fish Predation."
- Staff participated in EstuaryLive, a global Internet segment presented live from Weeks Bay Reserve on benthic communities and impacts of hurricanes.
- Conducted the Eighth Annual Weeks Bay Area River Cleanup.

# State Parks

The State Parks Division operates and maintains 22 state parks encompassing approximately 48,000 acres of land and water in Alabama. The parks range from Gulf Coast beaches to Appalachian Mountains and provide opportunities and facilities from basic day-use activities, to resort convention lodging, restaurant and golfing areas.

The mission of the Division is to acquire and preserve natural areas; to develop, furnish, operate and maintain recreational facilities, and to extend the public's knowledge of the state's natural environment.

The Division's goals are to manage and operate the State Parks system in an economically sound and efficient manner on the most self-sustaining basis possible; to provide and maintain high quality facilities and services to meet the needs of visitors; to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of individuals through outdoor experiences; to promote use of State Parks facilities; to preserve unique natural features and integrity of State Parks for future generations and to promote good will and enhance the public image of Alabama, and the Alabama State Parks through dedicated, courteous employees.

## Accomplishments

The division continued to operate and maintain 22 state parks serving more than 4.4 million guests annually on a constantly decreasing operational budget. Additional significant accomplishments were made in improving purchasing procedures, computer systems, operation and maintenance policies, financial management analysis, advertising and marketing, natural resource management and the continuous coordination, supervision and implementation of a comprehensive statewide, state parks renovations program.

## Facilities and Personnel

Each of the 22 operational state parks has an internal park staff determined by size, development and operation of each area. Total employees for all parks vary from approximately 800 during peak season to approximately 600 during the off-season.

The Parks Division central office in Montgomery includes six sections: Administrative, Operations and Maintenance, Purchasing, Management Analysis, Natural Resources and Advertising/Marketing, and operates with a total of 19 full-time and 3 part-time staff.

## Problems and Solutions

Lack of sufficient funds for total renovation and repair



of aging facilities and replacement of worn out equipment is the major problem for State Parks. A source of steady, level funding to support prioritized facility maintenance is the necessary solution to this problem. It is hoped that increased park utilization and revenue generated as stimulated by the progressing renovations will be a solution to this basic parks issue.

## MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS SECTION

The responsibilities and functions of the Management Analysis Section are to provide general administrative direction and coordination for management control, administrative cost analysis, performance reporting, data processing, general accounting, budgeting, payables, receivables, and purchasing.

## Accomplishments

Section personnel received, processed and analyzed [2,352](#) performance reports for all state parks; prepared Park System Performance Reports as required by the Budget Management Act; received, processed and analyzed operations plans, budget reports and related reports; prepared Park System Operation Plans and fiscal year budgets; processed approximately \$32,338,302 in receipts and 19,124 payment vouchers; and disbursed approximately 37,604 warrants and payroll checks through and from the State Accounting System.

Section staff also continuously monitored data processing output, distributed it to statewide park cost centers, and monitored managerial audits as well as personnel actual versus budget for each state park. Management Analysis is continuing to work with Central Accounting Data Processing and developing detailed monthly financial statements as it relates to overall financial aspects of the State Parks System as well as specific operations. Management Analysis continued to revise resale inventory procedures to promote better accountability.

## Future Plans

- Increase programming to streamline automated accounting at park level in order to monitor business and personnel.

- Continue to improve monthly financial reports generated through IT Data Processing to aid managers in making financial decisions relating to business and personnel.
- Analyze individual park facilities to determine the cost effectiveness.

## NATURAL RESOURCES SECTION

The Natural Resources Section was created in 1982 to manage the natural, scientific and biological aspects of all State Park land and water areas. Administrative functions include managing, protecting and enhancing state parks' natural resources and providing opportunities for public access and enjoyment of natural resource areas via nature trails, environmental programs and special events. This section also coordinates in-house State Parks grants administration.

### Accomplishments

State Parks are normally thought of as land and water areas, of some natural or scenic significance, set aside for public enjoyment. Thus, it is within this concept that the Natural Resources Section strives to provide opportunities for park guests to better understand and enjoy these various natural wonders. In this concept, many park guests are entertained and educated through interpretive recreational activity and environmental education programs each year. Full-time interpretive naturalist programs are conducted at Gulf, Oak Mountain, DeSoto, and Lake Guntersville State Parks. In this effort Natural Resources personnel assisted with a wide variety of public outreach programs such as the annual Eagle Awareness events at Lake Guntersville State Park; Lake Eufaula's Fins, Feathers and Flowers Program; audio-visual and live presentation programs on tree identification, waterfowl, songbirds, raptors and other environmental topics; updated hiking and nature trail maps; and assisted in upgrading trails at Oak Mountain State Park.

Natural Resources staff produced brochure and magazine materials, attended the 2004 State Park Naturalist Seminar, planned several Earth Day activities, maintained and improved the bi-weekly Park Naturalist Information Coordination Program, consulted with and served on boards of organizations, and implemented a prescription burn plan for the enhancement of a pitcher plant/longleaf pine community at Gulf State Park.

Natural Resources personnel expanded an introductory course in basic fire management in the spring for parks field personnel. Further planning towards establishing classes through the Wild Land Fire Academy at Oak Mountain State Park were finalized as were plans to establish prescribed burn areas in five other state parks. Section personnel also coordinated and conducted a variety of research programs pertaining to white-tailed deer over populations at Oak Mountain and Lake Guntersville, and assisted in conducting two deer population reduction

public hunts at Oak Mountain State Park.

Natural Resources Staff also participated in Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Nongame Wildlife program events, Forever Wild Land Acquisition evaluations, and National Fishing Day events. Staff also applied for and received grant funding extensions for beach habitat enhancement at Gulf State Park and Recreation Trails Program funds for Peavine Falls Trailhead and Trail at Oak Mountain State Park.

Natural Resources staff additionally coordinated the construction three federally funded transient boat piers at Joe Wheeler State Park as well as boat pump-out stations for Wind Creek, Joe Wheeler and Lakepoint State Parks. An additional federal grant application was prepared, submitted and approved for a similar transient boat pier at Lake Guntersville State Park, to be constructed within the next 12 months.

Staff coordinated scientific collection permit requests for various park locations; aided in the Perdido Key Beach Mouse Study at Alabama Point, Gulf State Park; conducted fish management programs at park lakes; conducted aquatic vegetation reduction programs in various state park lakes; coordinated diseased timber removal statewide; assisted with forest insect and fungus research projects; conducted forest fire danger notification and suppression programs and coordinated contract preparation, timber marking and removal following southern pine beetle damage at various state parks.

The Natural Resources Section hired a Forest Program Specialist in April 2003. Through his efforts this past fiscal year, we have completed fuel reduction/wildlife habitat enhancement prescribe burns in five state parks that totaled 622 acres. In addition, timber stand improvement/wildlife habitat enhancement thinning operations were conducted in two parks that totaled 310 acres and generated \$219,292 in state park revenue. Tree planting initiatives, where needed, have also been initiated.

Natural Resources personnel reviewed and commented on hundreds of environmental compliance permit requests and reviewed and approved numerous collection permit applications where appropriate. Land encroachment, boundary line disputes/discrepancies and conflicts are handled continuously as the situation dictates. In this effort the section continues to upgrade Alabama State Parks deed files to establish procedures to maintain verified boundaries.

In 2002, the Natural Resources Section also assumed current and future responsibility for coordination, administration and management of all Alabama State Parks, Alabama Bass Trail duties including tournament scheduling, logistical planning, contract negotiation and preparation, tournament facility improvements and on-site supervision.

### Problems and Solutions

The section continues to face the problem of insufficient funding for serious problems such as correcting lake siltation at numerous parks, expanding the environmental



education program, constructing much-needed nature centers and initiating a greatly needed and long overdue park boundary survey and marking program. Funds have not been available for these projects, and solutions are still being sought.

## Future Plans

- Expand environmental education and interpretative facilities, activities and staff as needs and funds justify.
- Recommend construction of a nature center at Lake Guntersville; redesign Oak Mountain's nature center; add an interpretive program and possible facility at Joe Wheeler State Park, continue construction of natural habitat exhibits, and expand the nature center at Gulf State Park.
- Increase special winter events.
- Expand park timber and understory plant management to improve wildlife habitat carrying capacity, park aesthetics and timber production capability.
- Manage healthy wildlife populations compatible with habitat carrying capacity and enhance public wildlife observation opportunities.
- Manage aquatic programs for environmental quality and public enjoyment.
- Facilitate more training opportunities for parks' field personnel in wildland fire behavior and prescription burn practices.

- Seek greater awareness of State Parks through articles in magazines and other publications.
- Produce trail maps and natural resource management brochures and increase public communication to strengthen environmental responsibility among park guests.
- Explore the possibility of collecting field data through Geographical Information Systems to enable State Parks to more adequately inventory natural resources and produce color-coded maps of significant importance.

## Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance Section provides daily supervision for park managers and superintendents to ensure that more than 6 million annual park visitors enjoy high quality recreation facilities and services. The Operations and Maintenance Section staff logs many hours in the field inspecting facilities and equipment, investigating complaints and providing guidance to field personnel.

The section staff supervises a seventeen-man construction crew composed of a supervisor, carpenter supervisors, electricians, masons, and carpenters. The crew works on large and small projects in all parks that require more manpower or skill than is available at the park level. The Operation Section staff has been involved in pre-construction meetings with architects planning the renovation projects that are currently in progress or that has been completed.

A District Supervisor system was implemented this year to provide better guidance for the park managers. The Districts are: Northeast – Joe Wheeler, Monte Sano, Rickwood Caverns and Lake Lurleen; Northwest – Lake Guntersville, Cathedral Caverns, Buck's Pocket, and DeSoto; Central – Wind Creek, Oak Mountain, Cheaha, Paul M. Grist, and Roland Cooper; Southeast – Lakepoint, Blue Springs, Chewacla, and Frank Jackson; and Southwest – Gulf, Chickasaw, Florala, Bladon Springs, and Meaher.

Section personnel reviewed, approved and forwarded to the personnel section more than 735 hourly employee personnel action forms. Eleven merit system positions were filled after interviews and recommendations from the Operations and Maintenance Section.

Law enforcement training was conducted and coordinated by the operations staff for 46 state park officers.

More than 1,000 accident/incident/offense and arrest reports were submitted by the parks to this section for review and analysis.

Park Operations section personnel work with auditors and park staff to account for more than 5,110 inventory items valued at \$13,282,148. The Operation Section processes the transfer, addition and deletion of inventory items.



claims were filed by staff with Risk Management on various park structures. The largest claims were for a fire that destroyed the maintenance shop and equipment at Guntersville State Park and hurricane damage at Gulf State Park. A yearly review of insurance coverage is conducted to ensure that adequate coverage is maintained on the 824 park structures.

The Section staff investigated and made recommendations on 46 Board of Adjustment Claims that were filed against the State Parks Division. The section staff represented the Parks Division at Board of Adjustment hearings and testified concerning these claims before the Board.

Section staff worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on \$83,000 damage caused by spring flooding on May 12, 2003, at Buck's Pocket and Cathedral Caverns State Parks.

An equipment inspection and evaluation program is conducted by section staff to determine equipment needs and priorities.

The State Park Operations and Maintenance Section staff and construction crew worked on or completed the following projects this year:

**Blue Springs** – Repaired concrete swimming pool; a 30- by 60-foot picnic pavilion and 20- by 40-foot maintenance shop were built and the park office expanded using money that was donated to the park.

**Buck's Pocket** – A clean-up project after a flood was completed; 10 50-amp electrical boxes and posts were installed in the camping area and the creek banks were reshaped.

**Cathedral Caverns** – Construction of two picnic pavilions were completed; phone lines and equipment were replaced in the cave to allow for communication on cave tours.

**Cheaha** – Two large chimney caps were installed on the new group lodge; the old sewage treatment plant was cut up and covered with dirt.

**Chewacla** – Repairs were made to an apartment used for staff housing and work began to install six-foot fencing around sink hole areas in the park.

**Gulf** – Ceilings replaced in four lakeside cabins; the old group lodge was torn down and the concrete blocks used to build fish reefs; the old wooden boat shed was torn down in the picnic area; repairs were made to the pool at the hotel and the roof and ceiling at the pro shop; loose cement was removed and wood bracing was replaced on the concrete walls and roofs at the lodge. A crew installed plywood over windows and doors on buildings in preparation for Hurricane Ivan, which struck on September 16, 2004. Roofs were replaced or repaired on the lake store, nature center, staff houses and six of the 21 cabins. Boarding up of damaged buildings, clearing of the golf course and the continued repair of the cabins are several projects that will be worked on as Gulf State Park recovers from Ivan, which damaged or destroyed every facility in the park.

**Guntersville** – A 24- by 28-foot carport was completed.

**Lakepoint** – A used double-wide trailer was purchased and renovated to be used as a marina store while the building is being renovated; two sewage lift stations were repaired with new pumps and pipe.

**Lake Lurleen** – The electrical wiring was replaced on six campsites and drainage installed around the park office.

**Monte Sano** – Roofs were replaced on three houses, and roofs were replaced on four rustic trail shelters.

**Oak Mountain** – A project to move and improve the Peavine Trail and parking lot was completed. Wire and flooring were replaced on two birdcages on the Tree Top Trail. Repairs were made to the concrete blocks in the horse stables.

**Rickwood** – New concrete edging was poured around the pool and electrical wiring was replaced on four campsites.

**Joe Wheeler** – Six cabins were renovated; the floors were refinished, new paneling and sidings installed and the rooms were painted. Electrical wiring was installed to service to two new transit docks. Repairs were made to the lodge swimming pool to stop leaks. A chemical storage building was built for the golf course maintenance staff. A project to build a restroom at the boat ramp was started by installing 4,500 feet of 3-inch water line and foundation work.

**Wind Creek** – Three camping cabins were built in the campground. A new bathhouse and laundry is almost complete in the "B" section of the campground.

## STATE PARKS PROMOTIONS

The Alabama State Parks Promotions Section was created in 1983 to coordinate the overall advertising, market-

ing and promotional efforts of the Alabama State Parks system.

The administrative functions include coordination of radio and television public service announcements; preparation and distribution of promotional literature; coordination of print and photographic material for magazine, campground directories, and newspaper articles; cooperation and coordination with the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, tourist association and special events promoters; evaluation of advertising opportunities; purchasing of advertising space; production of ads and advertising materials; assistance with individual State Parks promotional efforts; participation in travel shows, sport and boat shows, special events, State Fair exhibits, continuous updating of our slide and photo file room; presentation programs for various civic clubs and other organizations and the general operation of our Central Reservations State Park service to the public.

## Accomplishments

The Promotions Section coordinated, developed and assisted in the promotion of various state parks ads and articles for print in in-state and out-of-state magazines and newspapers including Alabama Golf, Alabama Vacation Guide, Birmingham Tourist Guide, and Woodall's Annual Campground Directory. We continually evaluate various print media advertising opportunities that will increase the overall visibility of each Alabama State Park.

Promotions has continually improved and reprinted the various individual state park resort brochures to satisfy the growing tourism industry and public. Recently the State Park comprehensive four color brochure was redesigned and turned into a new vacation destination booklet. As a promotional effort, an unveiling ceremony was held at the Governor's Mansion for the press to help promote State Parks tourism in Alabama. The Promotions Section designed and printed a Cathedral Caverns color brochure to help promote the cave and the new visitor center facility at the park.

Recently established was the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program. This program was implemented to expand on the existing Volunteer Campground Host program. This new program provides numerous opportunities and activities in addition to the campground host opportunities, to those with a little spare time on their hands and a desire to help make Alabama State Parks the best they can be. By joining this important group of people you will be showing your concerns and support for Alabama's many natural resources and adding to the beauty of our Alabama State Parks system. The V.I.P. program was introduced earlier this year as a partnership program with the Department of Interior's "Take Pride In America" program. Governor Riley, First Lady Patsy Riley and representatives from our nation's capital took part in the program, which received extensive media coverage. A brochure and handbook were developed for this program.

The Promotions Section was involved in planning several state park groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies this past year. The ribbon cutting and dedication of the new welcoming center at Cathedral Caverns took place in December 2003. The new lodge at Monte Sano was recognized with a ribbon cutting ceremony in June 2003. A reception was held at the lodge a week later for local business that will be utilizing the facility. We continuously promote the newly renovated Bald Rock Lodge at Cheaha as a great meeting and wedding destination. In addition, groundbreaking ceremonies were conducted at Lakepoint at Lake Guntersville State Parks to acknowledge the beginning of improvements being made at each park.

For the second year the Promotions Section produced and mailed a Public Service Announcement provided by First Lady Patsy Riley to every FM and AM radio station in Alabama. We also prepared a mail piece for the lodge being renovated at Lake Guntersville State Park and sent it to over 170 individuals and organizations that have rented the facility in the past.

The Promotions Section participated at Senior Living Health Day in Birmingham by securing a display booth in exchange for a free weekend at a state park to be given away via a contest in the Senior Living Newspaper. We also participated in this year's National Fair held in Montgomery. A display was used to promote all of Alabama's State Parks. Four free weekend getaways at a state park were given away. Approximately 1,700 individuals registered for the free getaway drawing.

The 1-800-ALA-PARK telephone reservation and information system continues to receive extensive use. In addition to the calls transferred directly to the various park field locations by the voice menu system, the central reservations office also handles a continuous flow of calls and brochure mailouts.

State Parks Promotions was also involved in upgrading the State Parks Web site and direct email capabilities from within the central office and the individual state parks.

## Problems and Solutions

The biggest problem facing the State Parks Promotions, Advertising and Marketing Section is the lack of sufficient advertising funds, staff and the necessary advertising production equipment to properly advertise, and promote the Alabama State Parks.

## Future Plans

The State Park Promotions, Advertising and Marketing Section will continue to increase public awareness and encourage patronage of the Alabama State Parks through a variety of advertising, marketing, and various other promotional opportunities.

A continued effort will be directed toward revision of each resort state park brochure with work already begun



to produce new brochures for Joe Wheeler, Cheaha and DeSoto State Parks. Various package plans within our State Parks will be encouraged, even with the continued renovations program. Portfolios will be produced for resort parks as their renovations near completion. Educational classes are being planned to educate staff from each park on how to maintain and update their park's website on site. Added emphasis will be placed on linked ads from other Internet sites to further improve our parks' visibility with internet surfers.

A 400-plus mail piece will be sent to individuals who had reservations at Gulf State Park but will be unable to visit the park because of damage received from hurricane Ivan. In addition, the Promotions Section plans to participate in a Snowbird's Consumer show held in Lakeland, Florida. We will encourage snowbirds to visit campgrounds at other Alabama State Parks since the Gulf will be closed this winter for renovations and repairs. Promotional items will be given away to keep Alabama on the minds of the snowbirds long after the show ends.

We will increase our visibility next year with ads being placed in the "Inside Huntsville" resource and visitors guide. Also, we plan to reach the 27,000 subscribers of "Bama, Inside the Crimson Tide" and "Inside the Auburn Tigers" by placing ads in these magazines. Another 10,000-plus individuals who purchase these magazines at newsstands across the south will see the ads. In 2005 we will once again have an ad listing in the Trailer Life Campground Guide. Preferred listings for 12 parks will go on the website BigFish.com, with all parks being included in the regular listings. Southeastern RV will be available to campers at all state parks. We will be given free article space from time to time in exchange for making this paper available to campers. As a token of our appreciation, a specially designed lapel pin will be presented to those volunteers who have contributed a minimum of 250 hours of volunteer service to our Alabama State Parks.

A portable sound system is being purchased through the Promotions Section and will be available to the entire system for use at groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings and events where amplified sound is needed.

The State Parks library of slides, photos, and pictures on CD-ROM will be continually updated and maintained for public, and various media advertising needs.

This Section will continue to work actively with the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, other tour-

ist associations and various civic groups throughout the State of Alabama. We will strive to improve our in-house electronic media and advertising opportunities through our website and email capabilities to better accomplish our goals and objectives of the State Parks Division.

## PURCHASING SECTION

The State Parks Purchasing Section handles all purchasing activities for 22 State Parks, six golf courses and six motel and lodge complexes. Money for these purchases comes from various sources, such as: bond money, timber sales, donations, insurance, park revenues, FEMA, federal grants and other funds.

The Purchasing Office maintains a record of purchases, assists in paying vendors and works with Management Analysis Section to assure accurate accounting data.

The Purchasing Section consists of one supervisor, one full-time clerical and one part-time clerical employee, and operates under the laws and guidelines established by the Code of Alabama, Title 41, and the policies and procedures established by the Alabama Department of Finance.

## Accomplishments

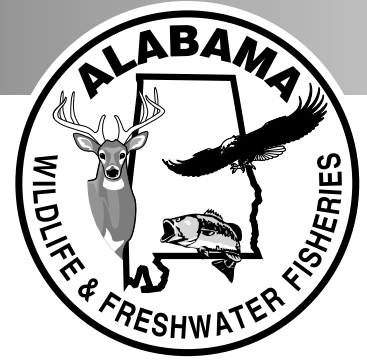
Accomplishments for the Purchasing Office for Fiscal Year 2004 include: routine purchases, emergency purchases and annual agreements. Some purchases during the year included new campground electrical supplies, new uniforms, an intercom system for Cathedral Caverns, fish for a fishing rodeo, building materials for Wind Creek State Park's new bathhouse and cabins, playground equipment for Joe Wheeler State Park, law enforcement equipment, and fencing for Chewacla State Park due to damage from blasting near the park, which caused sink holes.

## Future Plans

- To continue to provide services to parks and lodges for their daily purchasing needs, as well as during renovations and ongoing maintenance projects.
- To continue to be of service to support the Alabama State Parks system in areas of need, including helping to develop and maintain the website.



# Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries



The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, charged by law with protection, management and enhancement of the state's fish and wildlife resources, is composed of the Administrative, Enforcement, Fisheries, and Wildlife Sections. The Division meets these responsibilities by carrying out coordinated, scientifically-sound enforcement, management, research, development, and educational programs designed to ensure protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife populations and habitats for the sustainable benefit of the people of Alabama.

## Significant Accomplishments

The Youth Dove Hunting program was expanded to 33 sites across the state with approximately 1,530 participants, 28.9 percent of which were first time hunters. The Community Fishing Program conducted 63 events with over 12,416 participants. "Alabama Wildlife" a four-volume set of books depicting Alabama's diverse wildlife along with species priority designations was made available for public distribution.

## WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES

### Administrative

The Administrative Section carried out support services regarding personnel, budget, accounting, licenses, and property management. Activities were monitored and documentation maintained to ensure compliance with Federal Aid requirements. Planning and coordination of Division programs were conducted. Staff members served on committees, attended meetings and answered correspondence to coordinate activities with those of other organizations.

There are eleven staff members in the Section: Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Assistant Director, Aircraft Pilot II, Conservation Management Analyst, two Biologist IIIs, Biologist II, Accounting Technician I, ASA III, ASA II, and ASA I.

### Enforcement Section

The Law Enforcement Section of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries assists in management and enhancement of Alabama's wildlife and freshwater fish resources through a sound enforcement program.

## Facilities and Personnel

The Law Enforcement Section is headquartered in the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office in Montgomery. This office is staffed by the Chief Enforcement Officer, an Assistant Chief of Operations, an Assistant Chief of Administration (vacant), one Administrative Captain, one ASA I, one ASA II, one ASA III, one Account Clerk, six Police Communications Officer Is (1 vacant), and three part time radio operators (vacant). one ASA III, one Account Clerk, five Police Communications Officer is I, and three part time radio operators (vacant). The Montgomery staff processes vehicle repairs; orders, receives, and issues supplies and equipment; issues permits; conducts investigations; coordinates training; provides information to officers and the public regarding laws and regulations; provides guidance to officers and the public on enforcement issues; and performs other duties involving the enforcement program. The field staff is organized into six districts with a captain as supervisor and two lieutenants as assistant supervisors. Each district supervisor is assigned to a district office. Each district varies in size from nine to twelve counties with two officers in most counties. The section's investigative unit is staffed with one lieutenant as supervisor and four investigator positions (one vacant) that have the rank of sergeant. A special task force consists of retired officers who are POST certified. These officers are employed on a part-time basis and are used in problem areas of the state or where vacancies exist. The Law Enforcement Section is authorized 130-uniformed field officers. Eighteen of these positions are sergeants who are field supervisors with three per district. Currently, the Section has 92 field

### 2003-2004

#### Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Law Enforcement Statistics

**Arrests** ..... 8,009

**Warnings** ..... 1,489

officers on staff due to retirements and resignations. Currently, vacancies include one area sergeant, one lieutenant, and 20 field officers.

## Awards/Recognition

Sergeant Stephen Schrader of Dekalb County received the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Officer of the Year Award for Alabama.

The National Wild Turkey Federation recognized Conservation Enforcement Officer Shannon Holoway of Franklin County as Alabama's Officer of the Year.

Lt. Mike Pollard of Lee County received the Shikar Safari International's Wildlife Officer of the Year Award for Alabama.

## Critical Incidents

In September 2003, a Conservation Enforcement Officer responded to a call for assistance from a Morgan County Deputy Sheriff. Upon arrival at the scene, the Deputy was shot and was about to be shot again. The Officer shot and killed the assailant.

In August 2004, a Conservation Enforcement Officer responded to a call that persons were fishing without a permit in a commercial fish farm pond. The Officer confronted one of the suspects and attempted to arrest him. The suspect resisted arrest, assaulted the Officer and fled the scene. The suspect was later arrested and placed in the Bullock County Jail.

In September 2004, a Conservation Enforcement Officer was working a security detail in Wilcox County due to Hurricane Ivan. While working this detail he responded to a call that a person had been shot and the suspect was still at the scene. When officers arrived the suspect fled into a nearby house. Officers secured the house and waited for local police department to arrive. The suspect shot at the Officer from inside the house and the Officer returned fire. Several hours later the suspect surrendered to local authorities. No one was injured during the exchange of gunfire.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Arrests and Warnings:

Officers made 8,009 arrests and issued 1,489 warnings during the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the majority being for violations of Fish and Wildlife regulations with the remainder being for violations of Marine Police, Marine Resources, and other state laws.

### Training of Officers and Supervisors:

- 8 hour course of instruction in Point Shooting.
- 8 hour refresher course in PPCT and a 4 hour refresher course in SSGT.

- 8 hour boating laws enforcement training course.
- 6 hours instruction in survival swimming.
- Completed a comprehensive license/permit manual, which is utilized by field officers and office personnel.
- Completed a policy manual which is now issued to each officer.

## Equipment Purchases

- Six new boats were purchased to replace unserviceable patrol vessels.
- Fifteen new boat trailers were purchased to replace unserviceable trailers.
- Five new patrol vehicles were purchased to replace unreliable law enforcement patrol vehicles.
- Forty new hand held radios were purchased to replace many of the 18 year old radios currently in use.
- Replaced some aging VHF radio equipment as part of a comprehensive upgrade utilizing computer equipment, which will allow Montgomery Communication Center to have radio contact statewide.

## Recruitment

Seven recruits were hired as Conservation Enforcement Officers. They are assigned to the following counties: Chambers, Choctaw, Marshall, Mobile, Montgomery, Limestone, and Lee counties.

Interest in vacant Conservation Enforcement Officer positions is high and the announcement of the CEO examination always results in several hundred applicants taking the examination.

Efforts continue to recruit highly motivated and capable applicants. However, these efforts are largely ineffective without a continuous recruitment plan.

## FUTURE PLANS

- Hiring new officers to fill critical vacancies will be a priority.
- Fill the vacant Assistant Chief Position in the Montgomery Office.
- Replace all remaining hand held radios. These radios are 18 years old, obsolete and not reliable.
- Develop a comprehensive arrest database that can be utilized by all Divisions of the DCNR.
- Complete the updating of our aging VHF radio system to meet the communication needs of this Division.
- Complete a comprehensive training manual for use in



training new Conservation Enforcement Officers and continue to improve in-service training for all officers.

## FISHERIES SECTION

### Responsibilities and Functions

The Fisheries Section's mission is to protect, conserve and increase the freshwater aquatic resources of Alabama.

### Facilities and Personnel

There are 65 staff members in the Section including fisheries biologists, fisheries biologist aides, a malacologist, clerk stenographers, account clerks, administrative support assistants, building maintenance supervisors, a carpenter, equipment operators and laborers. Fisheries Section facilities include six permanent district offices with laboratories. The Section has three fish hatcheries with fish hatching and holding buildings, personnel residences and storage buildings. Twenty-three state-owned public fishing lakes in 20 counties have a total surface area of 1,912 acres. Each of the 20 locations has a concession building, storage building, and in some cases, a residence.

### Accomplishments

**Technical Assistance:** District fisheries biologists conducted 1,045 biological checks of farm ponds. Individuals requesting assistance were given appropriate solutions in writing to problems. The Fisheries Section reviewed, investigated and commented on 337 water-related permits and environmental impact statements. Written comments were provided to the appropriate agencies. Numerous staff members participated in meetings concerning the relicensing of nine Alabama Power Company hydroelectric projects. District biologists investigated 26 reported fish kills and cases of pollution. Formal reports prepared by the investigators were sent to the appropriate agencies.

**Public Fishing Lakes:** A total of 150,404 anglers harvested 274,432 fish weighing 202,289 pounds from all 23 state-operated public fishing lakes. Each angler averaged 1.4 pounds of fish per trip. These figures represent a decrease of 28.6 percent and 29.8 percent respectively, from the number and weight of fish harvested in FY04 than in FY03. The number of anglers fishing on Alabama's State Lakes decreased approximately 20 percent from FY 2003. Fisheries biologists and support personnel made 767 visits to State Lakes to evaluate the condition of fish populations and to conduct various operational and maintenance activities. The Carbon Hill, Eastaboga, and Marion fish hatcheries stocked a total of 3,076,349 fish into Alabama's State Lakes. Species stocked included

bluegill, channel catfish, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, black crappie, and white amur. An additional 3,300 pounds of rainbow trout were stocked into Madison County Lake.

New lake managers were hired at Chambers, Coffee, Dallas, Madison and Monroe County Lakes. Lake Manager contracts were renewed at Barbour, DeKalb, Escambia, Fayette, Lee and Marion County Lakes. An ADA fishing pier was completed at Washington County Lake. Heating/cooling, water, electrical and/or septic systems were repaired at Bibb, Chambers, Clay, Coffee, Escambia, Fayette, Lee and Walker County Lakes.

Washington County Lake remained closed to the public following renovation. Marginal treatments were conducted at Fayette, Madison and Coffee County Lakes. A shad treatment was conducted at Walker County Lake.

**Access Areas:** During the year, 414 routine inspections of 117 access areas were made by Fisheries Section personnel. In excess of \$665,000 of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries funds were obligated to develop and maintain boating access areas in FY04.

**Major accomplishments include the following:** Po Boys Landing in Lee County-dock repair; Halawakee Creek in Lee County-dock repair; Glover's Point in Talladega County-extend ramp; Mink Creek in Jackson County-security light; Satsuma in Mobile County-security light and ADA parking and repaving; Tuscahoma in Choctaw County-new ramp; Town Creek in Marshall County-repaving; Minky Creek in Marshall County-repaving; Spring Creek in Lawrence County-renovated boat ramp; Foster's Landing in Tuscaloosa County-heavy silt removal; Boligee in Greene County-heavy silt removal; East Diversion in Cherokee County-erosion control; Elk River North in Lauderdale County-storm damage cleanup; Madwind Creek in Tallapoosa County-erosion control; Mud Creek in Jackson County-dock repairs; and Bull Slough in Conecuh County-new boat ramp.

**Aquatic Plant Management:** Aquatic plant communities were monitored to determine their impact on small boat navigation and fish populations in Alabama's public waters in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. During FY04, 27 acres of mixed emergent aquatic vegetation consisting of Burhead sedge, alligator weed, water primrose, and giant cutgrass were treated in the Mobile Delta. In Dannelly Reservoir, 32 acres of alligatorweed were treated to provide angler access in the lower reservoir. Approximately 40 acres of Hydrilla

were treated unsuccessfully due to a river rise in Daub's Swamp on Demopolis Reservoir, and a 100-acre arm of Turkey Creek in Coffeetown Reservoir was treated successfully. Also, 46 acres of emergent aquatic vegetation were treated on Demopolis, 117 acres of emergent aquatic vegetation were treated on Coffeetown Reservoir, and 14 acres on Warrior during FY04.

**Presentations:** Fisheries Section biologists attended public meetings and workshops on fisheries resource topics around the State. Biologists gave 151 presentations to the public about various aquatic resource topics. Aquatic education program constituted 136 of those presentations.

**Fish Hatcheries:** The Carbon Hill, Eastaboga and Marion State Fish hatcheries distributed 57,160 largemouth bass and 556,250 bream to 138 new ponds (379.6 acres), 55 renovated old ponds (231 acres) and two ponds (5 acres) which needed corrective restocking of largemouth bass fingerlings. Fish were also stocked in public waters statewide, including public fishing lakes that totaled 4,570,482. (see page 37)

**Research:** Through the Investigation and Management Techniques for Public Waters Project, there were five contractual studies that were conducted during the year. These studies involved research on the recruitment of black bass in Alabama reservoirs, the assessment of river sedimentation and backwater connectivity on fish populations in Demopolis Reservoir, population characteristics of largemouth bass in the Mobile Delta, the population status and habitat delineation of redeye bass in the middle Tallapoosa River and the effects of tournament fishing on the black bass population of Lake Martin. Three projects funded through WCRP grants were continued during FY 2003-2004. These projects were an evaluation of habitat restoration in the Mobile Delta by means of treatment and control of exotic aquatic plants, a pilot small stream habitat survey and evaluation in Terrapin Creek and research and production work for the publication of a comprehensive book on Alabama's freshwater mussel species.

**Publications:** The 2003 Bass Angling Information Team (BAIT) Annual Report was completed and sent to the 45 supporting bass clubs. Manuscripts for two research studies completed by Fisheries Section staff, were published in the 57th Annual Proceedings of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Three articles were written for *Outdoor Alabama* magazine; "The Legacy of Homer Scott Swingle, Part Two: Establishing

## Summary of Imperiled Species Stocking FY 2003-2004 — Fisheries Section

Received from	Stocked by	Stocking Date	Species	Number	Location
Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute	Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries	Dec 16, 2003	Interrupted Rocksnail	3,286	Coosa River below Jordan Dam.

Fisheries Programs around the Globe,” “The Fish Factory: Dallas County Public Fishing Lake,” and “The Secret is Out! Experience Great Fishing at William B. Dannelly Reservoir.” One article was written for Alabama Forests, “ABCs of Bass Fishing in Alabama.”

**Reservoir Management:** Black bass, hybrid and striped bass, sauger, shad, crappie, bluegill, and redear populations were sampled by electrofishing, trap netting, trawling and/or gillnetting in Bear Creek, Wheeler, Pickwick, Weiss, Neely Henry, Guntersville, Harris, Lay, Tuscaloosa, Demopolis, Mitchell, Martin, Gantt and Eufaula reservoirs in addition to the upper and lower Mobile Delta. All fish collected were measured and weighed. Thermal and oxygen profiles were collected from most of the previously mentioned reservoirs. Reservoir reconnaissance surveys were completed on all reservoirs where standardized sampling was performed. Results of the surveys are incorporated into reservoir reports. Relative values of angler harvest, effort, and pressure were collected by creel surveys on Pickwick, Weiss, Tuscaloosa, and Mitchell reservoirs. Creel data will be summarized for all locations and included in the appropriate reservoir reports.

**General Survey:** General fish sampling and surveys were conducted on Wheeler, Lewis Smith, Jordan, Harding, Mitchell, Millers Ferry and Coffeetown reservoirs. Fisheries survey work was also performed on the Little River (DeKalb and Cherokee counties) and the Choctawhatchee, Conecuh, Perdido, Sepulga and Coosa rivers. Samples of bass, catfish or representatives of other predator or omnivore groups were collected from several locations for a cooperative contaminant study with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

**Endangered Species (Section-6) Studies:** The staff malacologist conducted two endangered species (i.e., Tennessee River mussel and snail recovery and Coosa

River mussel and snail survey) Section 6 studies in FY04. The nongame fish coordinator administered the following nine additional Section 6 contractual studies in FY04: blue sucker population survey, paddlefish population survey, Cahaba River Basin mollusk survey, endangered mussels of the Coosa and Cahaba survey, red shiner survey, Bear Creek sedimentation survey, Elk River fish survey, coastal river’s rare fish survey, and Uchee Creek fish survey.

**Aquatic Education (Community Fishing Program):** The Fisheries Section, with assistance from other sections of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, conducted 63 community fishing events, reaching 12,416 participants plus their families and volunteers. Fishing classes were conducted for various audiences (mostly youth) during 49 sessions that reached 854 participants. One casting class was taught in a school for 30 participants. Rods and reels were loaned to physical education instructors who allowed students to practice casting. Sixteen presentations were given to 215 teachers. In addition, talks about how aquatic resources function were presented to 70 groups with a total audience of 3,563. Additional information was presented to the public through displays for 45 days at events such as boat shows, fairs and Earth Day celebrations.

**Freshwater Mussel Management and Research:** A total of 26 biological field trips were made during this fiscal year for general and specialized surveys of mussel and snail populations. Survey sites included locations on the Cahaba, Conecuh, Alabama, Locust Fork, Tennessee, Sipsey Fork, Tombigbee and Coosa rivers as well as numerous tributary streams. Assistance and consultation regarding mollusk issues were provided to Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Geological Survey of Alabama, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute and The Nature Conservancy. The Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute donated 3,286 cultured Interrupted Rocksnails to the Fisheries Section. These snails were stocked in the Coosa River below Jordan Dam by staff personnel (Table 36).

**Nongame Fish Activities:** The nongame fish coordinator participated in numerous meetings with the Alabama Power Company regarding relicensing issues and attended the Gulf of Mexico Regional Panel meeting concerning aquatic nuisance species issues.

A fish survey was begun in the tailwaters of Martin Dam, which will be conducted on a quarterly basis. These data will be important for future relicensing issues. A survey to determine the status of the stippled darters, a proposed candidate species for listing, was initiated. Sampling was conducted for pacu in Jones Bluff Reservoir and for flathead catfish in the Choctawhatchee River.

## Fish Stocked in Public Waters during 2003-04\*

Species	Inch Group	Number
Largemouth Bass – Florida	1-13	366,940
Largemouth Bass - Northern	8-11	3525
Striped Bass - Gulf Race	Fry-2	536,575
Hybrid Striped Bass	1-2	535,984
Channel Catfish	8-17	152,512
Bluegill	1-10	2,935,321
Redear	1-2	17,000
Black Crappie	2-4	5,100
White Amur (Grass Carp)	10-15	30
Rainbow Trout	8-11	17,495
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4,570,482</b>

\*Includes state-owned and managed public fishing lakes

Nongame fish personnel and equipment were relocated from Marion Fish Hatchery to the Conservation Warehouse in Montgomery. Nongame fish and district personnel conducted a total of 53 biological trips in an attempt to collect Alabama sturgeon; however, none were collected. Nongame staff assisted the District-VI staff with Hurricane Ivan debris clean-up at Pike County State Lake and assisted the staff malacologist with assessing a mussel kill on the Tennessee River.

The nongame fish coordinator assisted with the development of the Comprehensive Wildlife and Conservation Strategy by reviewing proposals for the plan, internet site, public input, and competitive grant proposals. A recommendation was made to list the lipstick darter as state protected. The nongame fish coordinator processed 11 public water stocking permits and 3 special requests permits per approval from the Chief of Fisheries.

## Significant Problems/Solutions

**Public Fishing Lakes:** Bass crowding continues to be a problem statewide. Removal of bass by the use of anglers, electrofishing gear, along with judicious use of marginal treatments and slot limits, will be employed to manage overcrowded bass populations.

Recruitment of qualified lake managers at rural lakes continues to be a problem. This problem seems to be alleviated where suitable housing can be provided.

Washington County Lake remained closed due to draining and renovation. The lake will be re-stocked in FY05 and re-opened in FY06.

There is a need to advertise and market these recreational fishing opportunities to the public.

**Riverine Habitat:** The loss of riverine habitat in Alabama has resulted in the decline or loss of obligate riverine fishes. Efforts continue to document habitat loss and provide suitable riverine habitat where possible. There is a need to develop a comprehensive plan for the permitting or managing of water withdrawals, water discharges and instream flow changes as it relates to the protection of aquatic habitat.

**Aquatic Plants:** The spread of established species of exotic aquatic vegetation and the loss of native aquatic plants remains an issue for Alabama waters. The threat of the introduction of other noxious plants to public waters is constantly present. Funding is inadequate and our authority is limited for the control of existing vegetation problems and responding to reports of new introductions.

**Fish Hatcheries:** The goal of propagating Alabama sturgeon has not been achieved at this time due to the inability in acquiring sufficient numbers of broodfish. Many production ponds including drain kettles, water supply lines, drainage lines and power supply to the ponds are in need of renovation.

**Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS):** The greatest challenge facing resource agencies may very well be the control of the introduction of ANS into public waters. Various exotic fish, mussels, snails, crayfish, plants, microinvertebrates, viruses, bacteria and other non-native species are causing, and will result in, an escalating impact to economics, recreation, public health and the ecology. The first step is to develop a statewide comprehensive aquatic nuisance species plan which will require a commitment of staff and funds.

## Future Plans

- Continue resurfacing parking lots at boating access areas and construct new ramps statewide where a need exists and local in-kind matching funds are available.
- Monitor reservoir fish populations and riverine habitat.
- Expand riverine fish population sampling.
- Continue to search and collect Alabama sturgeon.
- Participate in the Alternative Relicensing Process for nine dams in the Coosa and Warrior drainages and two dams on the Conecuh River.
- Our goal is to open the Aquatic Resource Culture Center in FY05 with a small staff and begin to culture and stock mussel, snail, crayfish and non-game fish species of concern.
- Expand efforts to introduce children to fishing and in raising awareness of aquatic resources which includes the appointment of a second aquatic education biologist for central Alabama.
- A safety committee has been formed to develop recommendations for training employees and to implement a safety protocol for all employees. The plan will be completed in FY05.

## WILDLIFE SECTION

The mission of the Wildlife Section is to manage and enhance the wildlife resources of Alabama and to provide for maximum public benefit. The section maintains Wildlife

Management Areas (WMAs) to provide public access for hunting and recreation; monitors wildlife populations to determine management needs; provides the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director recommendations on hunting season lengths, dates, bag limits and restrictions; provides technical assistance to landowners, managers and hunting clubs on wildlife and habitat management and harvest strategies to improve wildlife resources, and on animal damage control to protect crops and property as much as practical without undue damage to wildlife resources. The section provides technical assistance to other government agencies to help structure activities to avoid undue damage to wildlife and enhance those resources where possible. The section also provides information to the public on the natural history, problems and management needs of Alabama wildlife.

The section provides a Hunter Education Program to train the public, especially beginning hunters, on safety, ethics and individual responsibilities of wildlife conservation.

Wildlife Section operations involve ongoing projects such as developing and maintaining wildlife openings, roads, buildings and boundary lines on 34 WMAs, two wildlife refuges and two sanctuaries (approximately 801,767 acres); administering public hunts on approximately 794,767 acres of WMA land; stocking wild turkeys; participating on boards and committees to provide input into plans and decisions affecting wildlife; conducting wildlife research and surveys and publishing the results; cooperating with universities to conduct wildlife research of mutual interest; administering a Nongame Wildlife Program; planning and coordinating environmental activities and review of impact statements; and administering the Alabama Cooperative Deer Management Assistance Program.

## Facilities and Personnel

An administrative staff with offices in Montgomery coordinated and monitored operations within the Wildlife Section. The staff consisted of a Wildlife Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, one Forester, one Hunter Education Program Coordinator, one Nongame Wildlife Coordinator, one Wildlife Biologist and four clerical personnel.

Six districts across the state are staffed by a supervising wildlife biologist and include a number of area wildlife biologists and managers, biologist aides, equipment operators, clerical personnel and laborers. One nongame wildlife biologist was headquartered at Florence primarily for north Alabama assignments and one at Spanish Fort for south Alabama. One Hunter Education Coordinator was assigned at Cullman to handle north Alabama activities and one at Andalusia for south Alabama activities.

## Accomplishments

Wildlife Section personnel participated in meetings of the Mississippi Flyway Council, Alabama's primary means of input into waterfowl management decisions that affect this state. Fourteen states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, three Canadian Provinces and several private organizations participate each year. One assistant chief serves as the consultant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representing the southern region of the Mississippi Flyway Council.

Research and biological surveys were conducted to obtain information on wildlife and their habitats. Aerial waterfowl censuses and hunter bag checks were conducted in the Mobile Delta and on the Tennessee River during fall and winter. Aerial censuses were also conducted for bald eagles.

Information was collected on WMAs and other sites to determine deer hunter participation and success, the physical condition of deer and the current status of deer populations. Deer were collected at 11 sites to assess reproductive characteristics within those populations. A hunting activity survey was conducted and published. The results were valuable in determining hunting season lengths and bag limits and evaluating the success of each hunting season.

An annual 28-survey-route mourning dove study was conducted with information shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to form season and bag limit regulations. As part of a nationwide project, 1,110 mourning doves were trapped, banded and released. Data from reported band returns will be analyzed to provide parameters needed for dove population modeling such as band return rates and estimates for mortality and survival.

## Wildlife Section Facilities

<b>Montgomery</b>	Central office and warehouse facilities
<b>District I</b>	District office (Tanner) and 7 WMAs
<b>District II</b>	District office (Jacksonville), 7 WMAs and 2 wildlife refuges
<b>District III</b>	District office (Northport), office (Demopolis), 6 WMAs

<b>District IV</b>	District office (Prattville), 4 WMAs
<b>District V</b>	District office (Spanish Fort), office (Jackson), 7 WMAs and 2 wildlife sanctuaries
<b>District VI</b>	District office (Andalusia), office (Enterprise) and 3 WMA.

Furbearer populations are evaluated by means of a survey in which the number of road kills and sightings of live animals near roads are recorded by Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries personnel to develop population indices.

The Wildlife Section and Auburn University continued a study to assess the effects of growing season prescribed fire on productivity and survival of northern bobwhites. We are also cooperating with the U.S. Forest Service and Quail Unlimited on a project to improve habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers and northern bobwhites on the Shoal Creek District of the U.S. Forest Service.

Over 1,400 man-days were devoted to providing technical assistance to private landowners, corporations, hunting clubs and government agencies. Biologists made on-site inspections, reviewed plans and provided recommendations for effective wildlife management. The Cooperative Deer Management Assistance Program included 392 landowners and hunting clubs covering more than 857,000 acres. Cooperation between hunters, biologists and enforcement personnel permitted more flexibility in harvesting deer.

Approximately 207,500 man-days of hunting occurred on WMAs. Harvest figures reached expected levels. These areas also furnish trapping, fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping and nature study opportunities. A total of about 2,721 miles of boundary lines were marked, 11,434 acres of wildlife openings were maintained, and 1,919 miles of area roads were maintained.

The Hunting Trail for People with Physical Disabilities continues to be well received. During the year two new sites, one in Crenshaw County and one in partnership with the USDA Forest Service in Cleburne County, were added. The season opened with 15 sites on the trail.

Seven shooting ranges on Wildlife Management Areas and the Etowah Public Shooting Range continue to receive excellent public use. These ranges are open to the public on a daily basis during daylight hours. Maintenance is conducted throughout the year by staff members and volunteers. Construction of a 200 yard range at the Etowah Public Shooting Range was completed during fiscal year 2004.

Section personnel manned booths at functions such as state and county fairs, gun and boat shows, and forest festivals, making personal contacts and distributing educational material. Numerous presentations in a variety of forums were made to help the public better understand wildlife conservation issues.

Opportunities for youth participation in hunting are not as numerous as we would desire. The youth dove hunting program continued on 33 sites across the state. This is a cooperative effort with private landowners and other sponsors. The goal is to provide youth the opportunity to experience hunting in a positive atmosphere. The hunts were extremely popular with a significant percentage of the youth being first time hunters. The youth dove hunt

program received national recognition during the year. In addition, youth hunt opportunities were offered on the wildlife management areas for deer, turkey and waterfowl. The Conservation Advisory Board approved the first statewide youth deer hunt. That hunt will occur in FY 05.

Articles written by section staff were distributed once a week to statewide media as "Wildlife and the Outdoors" columns. These popular features were published in many newspapers, magazines and newsletters throughout Alabama and other states, and were effective in disseminating public information and increasing citizen awareness of services available from the Wildlife Section. Other articles were written for publication in specific magazines.

Nongame Wildlife Program biologists continued to monitor bald eagle overwintering and nesting populations in Alabama. A total of 93 bald eagles—76 adult and 17 immature—were recorded during the winter survey. Fifty-three confirmed nesting attempts were reported in 2004. The number of confirmed nesting attempts increased by six compared to the previous year (47) and 10 in 2002 (43). There have now been a total of 354 nesting attempts in the state since eagles resumed nesting in 1987. Each year the surveys continue to record an increase in the nesting bald eagle population within the state. During spring 2004, one additional juvenile eagle – obtained from the Birmingham Zoo – was successfully hacked in Lowndes County. With this additional single hacked bird, a total of 92 juvenile eagles have been hacked in Alabama since 1985.

Wildlife biologists with the Nongame Wildlife Program gave approximately 20 presentations to a variety of public groups on eagles, shorebirds, backyard wildlife habitat management, and other nongame wildlife species. Nongame biologists also participate in annual surveys to monitor the status of breeding birds in Alabama. The surveys include colonial nesting shorebirds in coastal Alabama, most notably on Gaillard Island where between 4,000 and 5,000 pairs of pelicans nest annually. Additionally, five routes of the Breeding Bird Survey are conducted annually by Nongame staff contributing to the continent-wide monitoring of neotropical and other resident nesting species.

Other bird surveys include participation in the International Migration Day count held in May. The Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas continues, and nongame biologists contribute to that database. Nongame biologists participate in two National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts, coordinating and compiling one of the count circles

Nongame staff are also charged with administering the permitting of falconry for the state. Eleven new falconers were tested and approved bringing the total number of permitted falconers in the state to 44.

The Nongame Wildlife Program received \$324,921 of federal aid funds for projects on wildlife species eligible for funding under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act.



Population and status surveys were conducted for the gray bat, alligator snapping turtle, cerulean warbler, blue sucker, and paddlefish. Systematic surveys were conducted on the Upper Tombigbee River, Coosa River, Black Warrior River, Paint Rock River and Tennessee River primary tributaries to document the presence of listed and candidate species of fish, snails, mussels and crayfish. Also, a project for habitat improvement for red-cockaded woodpeckers on the Talladega National Forest was started in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. Implementation and structuring of a Safe Harbor Plan for red-cockaded woodpeckers was initiated.

This was the 12th year that completing the Alabama Hunter Education Program was mandatory for first time hunting license buyers born on or after August 1, 1977. Changes to the Hunter Education law were enacted during the Regular Legislative Session. The new law exempts the following from that requirement: active duty U.S. military personnel, Alabama residents who are active members of the National Guard, and persons certified by the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission as law enforcement officers who are employed by a law enforcement agency. Hunter education instructors taught 407 classes totaling 4,884 hours of instruction and certified 11,222 students. The courses were taught by 702 certified instructors (500 volunteers and 202 employees). Approximately 2,000 Alabamians participated in 60 youth shooting sports events that were conducted throughout the state to promote safe, responsible firearms handling and improve marksmanship skills. These one-day events are designed to introduce participants to muzzleloaders, shotguns, .22 rifles, and pellet guns.

Alabama's National Archery in the Schools Program continued to show growth and now has approximately 35 schools participating. Teachers from 75 schools have been certified to conduct the two week Olympic style archery curriculum. This program has the potential to introduce over 100,000 students to Olympic style archery each year. The first annual NASP state championship was held on April 29, 2004 and featured 211 participants from 11 schools. Teachers, participants, spectators, and WFF employees stated the event was very well organized and look forward to future events. Teachers and school administrators have made positive statements regarding this program and report that student behavior, attendance, and attitudes have improved since implementing the NASP.

## Problems and Solutions

**Loss of Leased Land:** The continual loss of leased land and the threat of loss for WMAs is a significant problem. During the year a significant portion of the Kinterbish WMA and smaller portions of other WMAs were withdrawn. Land lost is usually closed to the public and leased to a relatively small number of individuals. More leased land is likely to be lost in the future. The Wildlife Section will attempt to lease or purchase other lands and provide addi-

tional incentives to encourage landowners to include lands in the program. We will also continue to work with Forever Wild in an effort to purchase land for public hunting.

**License Holder Database:** One problem of the division shared by this section is the lack of an electronic database of license holders. Because this information is lacking, it is extremely difficult to understand our customers or to establish trend data of the hunters and anglers. The lack of a database also hampers survey work. To complete our annual hunter harvest survey we continue to have to manually search the licenses sold. It is a slow process that does not accommodate new surveys being implemented. Some improvements have been made but more are needed.

**Nongame Funding:** Funding for the Nongame Wildlife Program is not adequate. Revenue from the income tax check-off has leveled off. Funds from Federal initiatives are becoming available but they require a state-matching share of 25 to 50 percent. Additional sources of revenue are required to meet this need.

**Wildlife Diseases:** Wildlife diseases are not new but one in particular continues to demand attention. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) once thought to be a problem in only the western part of the country has been found in other areas. Its spread is linked mostly to the transportation of deer and elk. Due to the severe impact CWD can have on a deer population, we have taken several steps. We continued the random surveillance program. All deer tested were negative. We also continue participation with other agencies in a CWD Working Group. That work will continue into the next year.

**Diversity in the Workforce:** We have not been as successful as we had hoped in creating diversity in the section's workforce. We have participated in the SEAFWA diversity committee and have communicated our needs to university wildlife departments. This problem is not unique to Alabama and is one we will continue to work to improve.

**Hunter Education:** The mandatory hunter education program brought Alabama in line with the majority of states. The program is beneficial in providing information to the state's hunters. We continue to explore better delivery mechanisms to minimize scheduling conflicts. A home study option has been developed for hardship cases. A Hunter Education CD ROM program developed in cooperation with seven other Southeastern states has been readily accepted by instructors and students. A Hunter Education internet course was brought online in the spring of 2003. This course along with the CD-ROM has greatly improved access to the mandatory hunter education program. Volunteers continue to be an integral part of the program by teaching classes and delivering the information to students.

Public attitudes toward management of deer in Alabama have shifted from management for higher numbers of deer to management for improved quality within deer popula-

tions. Changes in seasons and bag limits have been made in order to help alleviate problems such as overpopulation, unbalanced sex ratios, and the percent of bucks and does in the harvest. Wildlife biologists continue to work with hunters to help them better understand harvest strategies and to help them develop a program to meet their goals.

**Hunter Participation:** Hunter participation continues to remain approximately the same over the past few years. However, over the long term, statistical numbers reveal a decrease in comparison to the percentage of the population. There are many contributing factors to this, and it is not a problem unique to Alabama. Convenient locations to hunt and shoot are part of the problem and steps to correct those problems have been mentioned. It is thought that low participation is greatest in the younger age groups. An emphasis on youth programs will continue. A computer based license distribution system would assist in obtaining and analyzing demographic information.

## Future Plans

The Wildlife Section will continue operating WMAs for outdoor recreation. Every effort will be made to add acreage to WMAs, including contacts with corporate and private landowners and working with the Forever Wild program to identify appropriate tracts of land to purchase.

We will continue to improve our relationship with the non-hunting public. Legislation in the U.S. Congress has provided limited funding for nongame wildlife work. It appears it will be some time before the comprehensive program most states prefer is passed. Any federal money that becomes available will require a state match.

Sport shooting is closely related to hunting activities, and it is important for the public to have safe areas to participate in that sport. We will continue our efforts to increase

developed shooting range sites. We are anxious to form more partnerships similar to the one in Etowah County.

We plan to continue the youth dove hunting program by offering youth dove hunting sites across the state next year. This program has not only been popular with young hunters, it has opened many new areas for public hunting and has helped to create new partnerships. It has also brought national attention to our program. We will also maintain and continue to add sites to the hunting trail for people with physical disabilities.

Work continued and accelerated on the Nongame Wildlife Program's efforts to create a birding trail in north Alabama. Modeled after the highly successful Alabama Coastal Birding Trail—the North Alabama Birding Trail (NABT) will consist of 50 premier birding sites across north Alabama. These sites will be advertised by brochures, maps, site and directional signage, and an Internet web page. The NABT is expected to provide a quality recreation experience for the avitourist, to educate the public on conservation issues, and to provide an economic boost to the economies in north Alabama. The trail is planned to open in the spring of 2005.

Providing landowners and land managers technical assistance to better help them implement strategies to improve wildlife habitat on their lands continues to grow in importance. During the year discussions were held with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to learn how provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill could be utilized to benefit wildlife managers. An innovative partnership was developed with NRCS to help private landowners obtain better wildlife management advice and to better deliver the farm bill programs to landowners. Under a cost share agreement three WFF Wildlife Biologists work out of an NRCS office and work with NRCS personnel to deliver the programs. This program will continue and possibly expand.

## Budget and Expenditures for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division

<b>Section Name</b>	<b>Budgeted Amount*</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>
Administrative	\$794,555.00	\$679,307.00
Enforcement	10,105,504.00	8,973,839.00
Fisheries	5,765,910.00	5,335,751.00
Wildlife	8,971,345.00	8,371,811.00
Wildlife Diversity	480,094.00	282,002.00
<b><u>Transferred to Department</u></b>		
Administrative Transfer	1,960,652.00	1,960,652.00
Advertising Campaign	600,000.00	591,792.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,678,060.00</b>	<b>26,195,154.00</b>

*\*Funding includes Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration monies apportioned to Alabama based on the state's geographical size and hunting and fishing license sales.*





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